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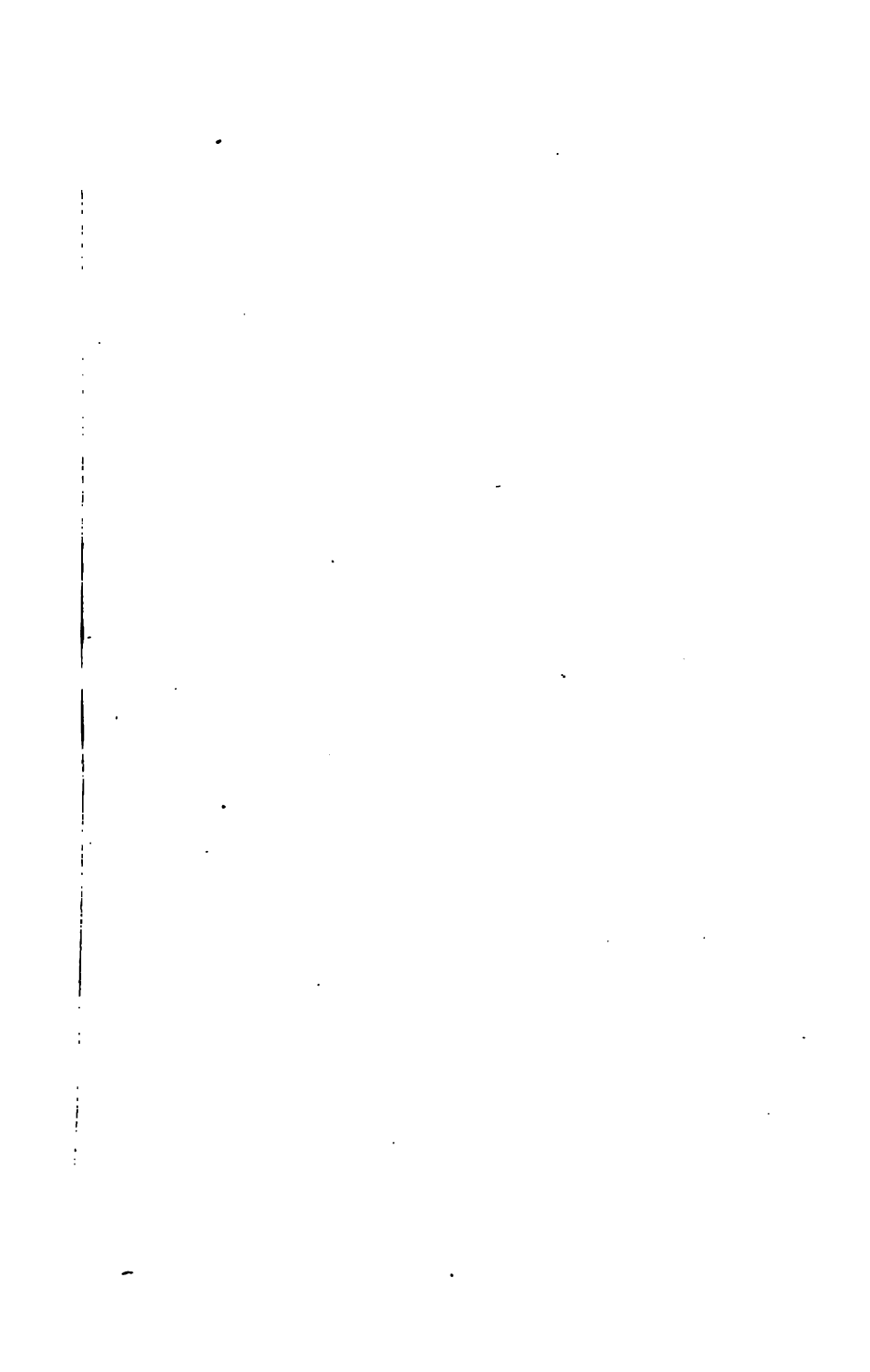
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ST. PHILIP'S.

CHAPTER I.

THE PARSONAGE.

*"Somewhat back from the village street,
Stands the old-fashioned country seat ;
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar trees their shadows throw."*

THE knocker was muffled on Dr. Upham's door; the windows of the second story were all closed tight against the light of the dim and hazy autumn afternoon; the hall, the parlor, the dining-room, the Doctor's study, were all vacant; the servants, in their end of the house, went through their work cautiously, and talked in lowered tones; occasionally, from the further end of the garden, there came the shout of a child at play—and then the sharp, low reprimand of the attendant charged with the business of keeping him as far away from the house and as quiet as he could be kept.

He was a small, delicately-made child, with yellow curls down to his waist; and his nurse was a dull, discontented-looking German woman, who knit, and scolded, and scowled, at one and the same time. The boy shouted, laughed, swung himself from round to round of the arbor that supported the old grape-vine, showered the dead leaves and the ripe fruit on his nurse's head, gambolled with the dog, pelted and scared the pigeons on the eaves—quite careless of the fact that in the house, in a very dark and silent room up stairs, his mother lay dying—agonizing with the thought of leaving him.

His grandfather, pacing slowly up and down the chamber where his wife had died fourteen years before, on just such a still, close autumn day as this, lifted the sash and looked out once and again at the child with a thought of checking the mirth that grated so upon him; but each time, with a sigh, he had turned away and left the boy to enjoy his little day, for his heart was mellowed by sixty years of life—forty years of ministry among the suffering and dying—experience of a thousand pains, and memories of a thousand lost delights.

Presently a young girl came out from the house, paused half way down the path, called "Julian" almost in a whisper, watched his wild play for a moment, and, with an expression of acute pain upon her features, turned away, unable to tell him what she thought he ought to know.

This was Christine, the clergyman's youngest daughter, sister to her who lay dying in the house. These two were all that were left to the old man of his many sons and daughters, born to him in this very house; Helena, the eldest, whose moments with him were now numbered, and Christina, the youngest, whose coming had cost her mother's life. Between "Helena" and "Christina," in the family bible, there was a list of names with corresponding record on a row of little graves in the churchyard that adjoined the garden. Christina had grown up to fourteen years, a lonely, dreamy child, feeling that her playmates were in heaven, and her mother somewhere in the air about her. Her father always looked at her with a sigh; she knew her mother went when she came, and she lived an unreal, unchildlike life amid the vacant places of her vanished comrades.

Dr. Upham loved his little daughter, but not as he had loved the first who had come to bless his early happy home. That was human love, eager and fond; this was the calm tenderness of spirit watching spirit. He loved her, perhaps, as her mother somewhere in the air about her, loved her; he had schooled

himself to feel she would soon go as all the rest had gone; he was a sad, almost an old man, incapable of strong new feeling when she came to him; the strength and glory of his day were gone, it would be henceforth

"The glimmer of twilight,
Never glad, confident morning again."

And so with all his tenderness and benevolence he was but a poor companion to the little girl, hungry for a living sympathy

The eldest daughter, little Julian's mother, had been since her marriage almost as dead to him as his sons and daughters lying "under the long grass of years," in the calm churchyard beyond the garden wall. Ten years before, when Christine was almost a baby, this sister, then in the early bloom of very brilliant beauty, had married in a rash, inconsiderate way, and gone abroad to live. She had always been her father's darling, but was a wilful and unsatisfactory child, missing a mother's guidance, and by no means fulfilling her duty to him or to her little sister. She was very young, entirely uncontrolled, her beauty was dazzling, her temper uncertain, her mind unformed; many people said it was a thing for her family and the parish to be thankful for, when she married respectably and went away to live.

Little was heard of her for the first five years of her married life; then came dark rumors of domestic troubles, separation from her husband, a lawsuit, contention for the guardianship of the child, pecuniary difficulties; and finally, total silence.

About a month before the hazy autumn afternoon on which this story opens, there had arrived at the Parsonage a broken-spirited, haggard-looking woman, bearing dim traces of former beauty, a wild and petulant boy, and a strange-eyed foreign nurse. Helena had come home to die; she had helped to break her father's heart, but it yearned over her with the fondest love, and he paced up and down the room next hers, wait-

ing with deep anguish for the tidings from within that he feared each moment now would bring.

Christine, leaning against the half-open window in the hall, looked at him timidly, but dared not go to him. She was terrified at the great mystery approaching; she longed to have some one speak to her, but she dared not speak to any one. She was awed as much by the silence of the house, the grave looks of those around, the newness of the thoughts suggested, as by the fear of separation from one who had never been much more than an idea to her. It was the chill of death in the air, the grazing of the mysterious against the commonplace, the known against the unknown, more than the thought of parting from her sister, that was frightening her.

All day she had been in a kind of dream, afraid to think of the dark room from which she was excluded, yet afraid to turn her thoughts to ordinary things. She read long chapters in the Bible, she said long prayers in a chilled and frightened whisper, listening all the time with a dreadful choking in her throat for a footstep or a word in the hall outside. She felt as if she were in church where some solemn service in an unknown tongue was being celebrated, of which she could see the awe in the faces of those who understood. Her eyes were full of fear, her thin cheeks were white, her hands cold and weak, but her father did not see; he had but one child in his heart then, and she lay shivering in the grasp of death.

Presently the door of the sick room opened, and a grave-looking man came out. He glanced up and down the hall, and caught a glimpse of Christine, starting out of sight. He beckoned to her, looking at his watch.

"Your sister has asked for you," he said. "You can go in." She gave such a frightened start, that he added kindly:

"There is no immediate danger; the nurse will be within call, though she wishes to see you alone. A word will bring

her in if there should be any danger ; and I shall remain here till the last."

The last ! A chill crept through the child's veins as she went towards the door, stopping with her hand upon the latch, sick and faint with terror.

CHAPTER II.

A VOW.

"Why should her fleeting day-dreams fade unspoken,
Like daffodils that die with sheaths unbroken ?

Had the world nothing she might live to care for,
No second self to say her evening prayer for ?

HOLMES.

THE room into which the little girl was admitted was so dim that at first she could distinguish nothing but the tall bed from which the white curtains were swept back, and the dark figure of the nurse moving about in the obscurity. It was the spare-room of the Parsonage, one in which she was not much at home, but the arrangement of the furniture had been altered, and everything seemed strange and unfamiliar. There was a table with a white cover underneath the window, upon which medicines were set; on another was a spirit lamp, some cordials, and a bowl of ice; everything had the rigid look of a sick-room under the charge of a professional nurse.

At a sign from the dying woman the attendant admitted a ray more of light, and then, with rather a reluctant step, withdrew into an adjoining chamber.

Christine heard her name called faintly from the bed; she went towards it, knowing nothing but that her heart was throbbing with loud pulsations, and her throat was bursting with a dreadful pain. There was such a blur before her eyes that she could not see her sister's face, and she stood beside her for some minutes before she really knew what it was she looked upon. Helena was raised up with pillows; she breathed with painful

effort, but she was fighting with the faintness produced by her emotion, and struggling to command herself for some last words that she hardly had the strength to utter. The unmistakable lividness of death had settled on her features, but her eyes burned with a restless glitter, and her lips moved with an eagerness that was in pitiful contrast to their ghastly purple.

"They did not tell me," she said, gasping at every word for breath, "till half an hour ago, how little time there was. I would have sent for you before, but I meant it should be the last thing."

There was a pause. "I have sent for you, Christine, because I have something that I wish to tell you. I want you to listen; you are not such a little girl; you will be fourteen somewhere about Christmas-time I know."

Christine tried to say "yes," and the dying woman went on: "Come a little nearer to me. I want to look at you. I want you to understand."

She came a step nearer to the bed, and pushing one thin hand under the pillow to support herself, Helena turned her head towards her, and fixing her strangely eager eyes upon her, went on, excitement strengthening her voice as she proceeded.

"Fourteen years is not so young; I took care of you when I was only a little past fourteen. I was very good to you, Christine, though you can't remember; only I married and had to go away. I have been very unhappy, and this is what I want to tell you about now; very unhappy, very, very miserable. They have wronged me and my boy; there is no truth in what they say; the only thing about it was, I would not give him up to them. But I've got to give him up now. O my poor child!"

A low groan burst from her as she turned her face down upon the pillow.

"I've got to leave him, Christine, leave him alone without a soul to take care of him—the only thing I love in all the

world. That I've struggled and fought for, and hid myself and led such a dreadful life to keep with me! I'm going to die, and he has got to stay. Think of it, Christine! Don't you feel sorry for me; all these years thrown away, and his father will have him yet! His father, who has made me suffer so; I would rather have him in the coffin by me. O my baby!"

There was a moment of silence, as the mother lay with her convulsed face buried in the pillows; then lifting it suddenly, and with an effort, she fixed her eyes on the little girl and said in a hurried low voice:

"Christine, I give my boy to you; I make you his mother, I charge you to keep him; I have a right to, and I make him yours. My father is worn down and old; what does he know of children? Besides he will die some day, and then Julian is alone. But you—you will grow up, you will take care of him and watch him—you will not let him from your sight! Christine, you will live for him! You will hurry to be a woman; he needs so much care, he is so delicate. There is always that little cough, like mine I think; but he will outgrow it, he will be better in this air, I know. Don't leave him to Crescens; she is a dull old crone, she is not fit to manage him. Take care of him yourself; don't let anything come between him and you!"

There was a pause; the sufferer gasped for breath again, raised herself higher in the bed, while her eyes searched her sister's face with an eager, subtle look. When she spoke again it was in a different voice:

"You say 'yes'; I know you will love him and be good to him *now*, while there is nothing else—but when there comes a lover and a husband and babies of your own, you will forget my little boy! You will let him go if his father finds him out and comes for him; you will say—Well, yes, he may as well have him then. Oh, it breaks my heart! My Julian is as good as

lost if he once falls into his hands; or if he does not get him, he will be a poor neglected child, pushed out of the way for other children, nobody to pet him, nobody to go and look at him after he gets asleep at night, nobody to see that his clothes are pretty and that he is warm and comfortable. I see it all! I cannot talk about it; if you had a heart you would be sorry for me; you would not let me die believing that."

"What is it that you want?" said the younger one in a nollow whisper, looking at her bewilderedly.

"This is what I want," said the other, catching her breath and trying to raise herself up in her eagerness. "I want you to promise me something; it is not much, it is not unreasonable. I would not ask it if it were not best for you as well as him. You must not think that it is selfish; why, how could I be selfish when I—I am dying, as they say! I want Julian to be safe, and you, you will be so much better off. Christine! I have been so unhappy! There is so much trouble in the world if you are married. Men are brutes, Christine; that is all about them. I could tell you enough to make you loathe the very thought of being married. A husband! that is just a tyrant, a wretch who only cares to break your will, a good fellow who goes out into the world and leaves you biting at your chain at home. I cannot bear to think you should be so unwise; you, who have a home and money, and everything that makes girls need to marry. Besides you are not pretty, you are not the kind that marries. I have watched you; you are steady, straightforward, you are not *coquette*. With some girls it would be different, but you are like a nun. Ah! the nuns! How I envy them with their sweet calm looks, Christine. They don't have such rings about their eyes as these round mine; their skins are smooth and fair, they keep their beauty till they are old old, women; they are not haggard wretches while they are yet young, like me!

"Look at me, Christine! I was a beauty once, a beauty not

ten years ago. The people looked after me in the street; I could have had as many lovers as I wanted. And now I have the face of fifty; I shudder when they bring the glass to me. And that comes of being married; that comes of having a cruel wicked husband, who was, oh! like an angel of light at first. They deceive you so, Christine; it is *main de fer sous patte de velours*: always *main de fer* after the wedding glove comes off. You cannot take your innocent little pleasure, you must have the eyes always on the floor; you must not look pretty for any one but him. That is the beginning, Christine! That is the beginning that ends in hating, hating, hating! Oh, I cannot talk about it; it takes away my minutes to remember what I have gone through.

"Christina! I want you to promise me you will not marry! I want you to swear to me you will not. You must believe what I have said, you must remember it is all the worst of misery. You will be saved from being what I am, you will have a long and happy life; you will have Julian; I will give him to you, and that is the only good in being married—a child to love and have about you always. I have suffered for him; I had all the pain, I give you all the pleasure: oh, it is the best for you. How well I remember what sufferings those were! They thought that I would die; there were days and days I lay just between life and death. It was in Strasbourg; how the bells kept ringing; chime, chime, chime. I used to lie and listen. Ah! that is so long ago! He was very kind to me then; he would have done anything, I believe. They told me he never slept a moment, that he never left me all the time: it seems he must have been fond of me after all.

"Well, what was I saying? I got thinking of old times; he wanted a child so; he always had loved children. It was not me he cared for. Just as soon as I got well, it was the old trouble back again; jealous like a Turk. I could not stand it. No woman can stand things like that, Christine."

She sank back exhausted for a moment, though never taking her anxious glittering eyes away from the young girl's face, and struggling desperately for breath to speak again:—

"You will have Julian, as I said: you can live such a happy, easy life. You will have your little fortune, enough for you and him: poor boy, he has not anything; I had to use it all, these five years that I have been hiding him and living in strange cities; to travel costs so much. He is a little pauper; that is what he is, Christine. He is at your mercy. I don't know what will be the end. My father has not anything to leave; our poor mother little thought there would be only one left to have all her fortune. No matter, Christina: you must do as you will. I cannot ask it of you. But be kind to my poor darling for a little while! Do not turn him out just yet. He has been so petted, he has had everything lavished on him; it will be such a change. If you cannot promise what I ask, promise at least to be kind to him just at first, for his poor mother's sake, whom the good God takes away from him."

"I will promise anything you want," said the girl, in a low tone, putting her hand up to her head, as if with an effort to command her thoughts.

"I knew you had a good heart," murmured the dying woman, catching at her hand and trying to draw her towards her. "Heaven will reward you; you will be good to Julian, and he is an orphan! Promise me this: you will not marry; you will live for Julian; you will take care of him; you will share your fortune with him; you will do your best to keep him from his father; you will never give him up to any one! Promise me this—quick—I—I believe I am worse—I want to hear you—speak—"

"I promise."

The child's voice was low, but steady.

"You promise it before God, solemnly. I am dying; we keep faith with the dying; Heaven curses those who trifle with

the dead ; say this one thing to me ; kneel down as if you said your prayers ; say this, '*I swear it.*' "

Christine sank trembling on her knees beside the bed, feeling the convulsive grasp of her sister's cold and clammy hand and the strange fascination of her excited eye ; but through it all, knowing what she did. The words "before God, solemnly" had waked her from her trance. The terrible weight of a vow made to a dying woman in the name of Heaven, extinguished all childish terror and amazement. She was a religious child, morbidly conscientious, reverent to superstition. Helena had not watched her for a month in vain. She knew with whom she had to deal : she knew she could trust in this pale child if she could once bring her to pledge herself to what in after years she would still look upon as binding.

"Why need I swear?" she murmured, pressing her hands before her face. "It is so awful ! I will do all you say without."

"O my God !" cried the mother, in a shrill painful whisper, "she does not mean that I shall die in peace. Forgive her, my good Lord !"

"Hush, hush," murmured the child, putting up her hand to stop her. "I—*I swear it.*"

"God will bless you," gasped her dying sister, sinking back upon the pillow. "Kiss me, Christine."

She pulled her faintly towards her with the hand she had retained, and the little girl stooping forward, their lips met ; a touch that chilled her to her very soul. For months after she never closed her eyes to sleep without the shuddering recollection of those clammy lips on hers, that short hot breath upon her cheek.

"You are a good child," she panted, holding her face down hers : "you must never forget this day : you—you need not tell my father what has passed—between us—remember—it would distress him : God is witness. Now go—bring my boy to me—quick, Christine—I—I am faint—"

The nurse came back at a word from Christine. "Better call her father," she said, in a low tone, after a glance at the changed face on the pillow, as she hurried to the bed.

A few minutes later Christine led the child into the room. The physician, the nurse, and her father, standing by the pillow, gave way as she approached. The agonized eyes of the dying woman had been fixed upon the door by which she entered, and with a low moan she faintly stretched out her arms. Christine lifted the child up beside her.

"Julian, darling—kiss me—look at me," she gasped, in accents that were heartrending.

This was a dreadful death-scene; the agony of parting; the king of terrors dragging away his victim, who stretched her arms back wildly to where "low on the earth, her heart and treasure lay." There was no prayer; who could pray? The grey-haired father turned his head away in anguish from the sight; even those other two, familiar with death-beds, felt awed by this.

She caressed the boy with a passionate tenderness, pressed his curls against her lips, laid his soft cheek on hers, held him to her heart, called him a thousand loving names, cried out against the cruelty of death.

The final moment of physical suffering was appalling. She had combated death so long, that it shook her fiercely when she had to sink into its grasp. The child, in terror, recoiled from her; she groped for him with her empty arms, turned her darkened eyes towards him, and murmuring his name in broken accents, staggered out alone into the awful blackness—the door of life and hope for ever shut between her and her idol.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGER.

"Underneath that face, like summer ocean's,
Its lip as moveless, and its cheek as clear ;
Slumbers a whirlwind of the heart's emotions,
Love, hatred, pride, hope, sorrow—all save fear."

It was more than two years since there had been crape on Dr. Upham's door; the boy Julian was two years older, the girl Christine was now sixteen.

It was December; a still clear evening; the little town of — was lying in a frozen, silent way under the stars and moon. It was not yet seven, but the moon was so bright that a traveller, just entering the town by the western turnpike, slackening his horse's pace, took out his watch and read the hour distinctly on its face. He put it back again, and then rode forward on a walk. He looked about him thoughtfully, and paused with a moment's hesitation when he came to a point where the road forked. He chose the right hand way at last, guided perhaps by the "twinkling stars of household light" in the distance, and the glimmering of a sheet of ice beyond the trees in front of him.

He came presently upon an old mill standing on the edge of the pond, with long icicles hanging from its silent wheel, and the moonshine playing upon its padlocked door and dangling idle rope. The pond had been frozen over only since the night before; there were white cracks veining the clear ice, and along the dam and by the bridge it had been broken in several places. The pond lay in a sort of basin, with low hills surrounding it

on three sides—swamp-willows dipping down into its brink, and dark pine trees rising above it against the sky. There was a row of old poplars bordering the road along the dam, and the bridge, with its gate now shut and frozen, was a favorite trysting place for the youth of — on moonlight nights in summer.

As the horseman reached this point, he suddenly drew rein and turned his head towards the pond with the air of one who listens. He fancied he had heard something like a faint cry of distress coming from across the ice ; but the moonlight was so clear, he could see the whole extent of its surface quite distinctly, except in the deep shadow of the trees bordering its eastern edge. He stood still for some minutes ; called in a clear voice ; waited, listening keenly for an answer—called again ; there was complete silence, and he rode slowly forward. He had passed the dam and left the pond some distance behind him, when he abruptly turned his horse's head and retraced his steps thoughtfully. He could not get that faint cry out of his ears ; it could not have been fancy ; he was not given to that sort of thing. He descended from his horse, leading him along the dam, reconnoitring the surroundings of the mill and the edges of the pond, and sending many keen and anxious glances into the shadow thrown upon the ice by the dark trees on his left.

It was a lonely spot, though so near the town. The miller's house was not far distant, but it was out of sight ; he looked around in vain for some one to consult with on the sound that had disturbed him. After all, it may have been the distant echo of some schoolboy's shout in the woods beyond the swamp ; it must have been more distant than the pond, or his own calls would have elicited some answer. He turned away again, only half satisfied, however, and had reached the end of the dam, still leading his horse and looking back with an anxiety for which he ridiculed himself, when he heard a voice, and turning his head, saw a dark shadow lying across the moonlight in

his path. A young girl was standing before him wrapped in a long cloak, the hood of which had been drawn hurriedly over her head.

"Have you," she said, speaking quickly but without a shade of hesitation, "have you seen a little boy anywhere upon the dam or turnpike?"

"No," he returned, hesitating as he spoke; "no, I have seen no one."

"Thank you," she said, half-inaudibly, without looking at him again as she ran on. He paused and watched her; she stopped at the edge of the pond and called eagerly: "Julian! Julian!"

At this moment a boy crept through the bars near where the stranger stood, and was darting across the road, when the girl turned suddenly and saw him:

"Harry, Harry Gilmore!" she called, springing towards him, "where's Julian? Tell me, quick—you've been on the pond; you've had him with you."

"What business is it of mine where he is?" muttered the boy, plunging down the bank and striking into a path across the field. "Look after him yourself."

His face had a white, frightened look, and the haste he was making to get away struck the stranger as suspicious. He approached the girl, who stood pale and silent, looking across the ice.

"Is there any path around towards the east side of the pond?" he asked. "That is the only quarter of it we cannot see distinctly."

She caught his meaning, and with a quick movement said "yes," and sprang towards a barred gate just below which Harry Gilmore had come out. She pushed it open, and he followed her, throwing the bridle of his horse around the post. A narrow path led through a thicket of swamp-willow and alder-bushes, through which his guide led the way so fast he scarcely

could keep up with her. It grew narrower and more tangled, till, turning abruptly, it led down to the water's edge. They saw that the bushes had been broken down along the path, and that the frozen, marshy ground had tracks of wet and muddy feet. A pair of skates lay in the path. The girl reached the water's edge before her companion; she uttered a low cry that thrilled him painfully. There was a great break in the ice some twenty or thirty feet out from the bank, against which the water was gurgling with a low sound; a boy's cap floated on it.

"Stand back, my girl," he said quickly, as she made a step forward on the ice. "It will not bear us both. Run back and get the halter round my horse's neck. Quick! Don't lose a moment."

She gave him a bewildered look and minded him. He tore his way through the thicket to a fence bordering the marsh, and pulling off two heavy rails, dragged them back to the ice. His companion was there almost as soon as he; taking the rope and throwing his heavy coat into her arms, he bade her keep it and not move till he came back or called for her. Moving cautiously upon the ice, which bent beneath him, he pushed the rails before him till he approached the crevice, and then lay down, guiding himself by his hands alone. It was a dangerous experiment, and one in which he had very little hope. The current no doubt had sucked the body far out of reach by this time, and there was little chance that life could still exist in it, wherever it might be. Probably that faint cry he had heard had been the last. A moment more and he had reached the crevice; another, and the rope was round a little arm, caught by its sleeve in a projecting point of ice.

When he approached the bank with his dripping burden in his arms the girl covered her eyes and turned her head away.

"Put my coat around him," he said; "I think we may revive him. Now, run to my saddle-bag for a flask of brandy."

She was out of sight down the tangled path almost before the words left his lips. When he emerged from the thicket and reached the gate, she stood holding it open, with the flask of brandy in her hand. He laid his burden down upon the ground, turned the coat back from the face, while the girl again turned away. He took the brandy from her and bent over the child anxiously with one hand on his heart.

"How far to the village?" he said, wetting his lips with brandy and chafing his lifeless hands.

"Not half a mile," she said, in a steady voice though low. "But there is a short path through a lane to the church, and our house is next to it."

"That is the Parsonage?" he said, glancing up at her.

"Yes, Dr. Upham's," she returned. He stooped over the boy again, pushed back the yellow curls plastered on his temples as the moonlight fell upon his face, then wrapped the coat closely round him and stood up.

"You will have to lead my horse," he said, "and show me the way to the lane."

"That is the shortest way," she said, disentangling the bridle with quick movements and hurrying forward. "But if we go by the road we pass the doctor's."

"No matter for the doctor; I am one," he said. "All we want is to get him home."

"This way," she said, turning abruptly down into a lane that crossed the road. "Mind the path; it is full of ruts and is very rough."

That it certainly was; the stranger with difficulty saved himself from falling again and again as he plunged along the dark, uneven road.

"You had better let me carry him," she added after a while in a smothered voice, in which for the first time there was a tremble. Its intonation recalled her to her companion's thoughts; he seemed almost to have forgotten her.

"He is very safe with me," he said, speaking with an effort. "Your arms would not be strong enough for such a weight."

"I have often carried him."

"He is your brother?"

"Yes," she said, hesitatingly, "he is—my brother; yes."

"You must not be discouraged," he said, as they plodded on hurriedly and silently. "He may not have been long in the water. I have seen many cases of wonderful resuscitation."

She tried to answer, but her voice was choked.

They came presently into a broad flood of moonshine; she was some yards in advance, with her hand upon the horse's bridle, and she paused and looked back, saying, "We are almost there," as the church porch became visible through an opening in the trees; "we must go through the churchyard; it is the shortest way."

"Leave the horse here," said her companion, as they reached the unused gate that opened on the lower side of the churchyard. She hastily twisted the bridle round the low branch of a cedar-tree that stood by the wall, and pushing open the gate, went on before him, picking her way over the irregular, unmarked graves that filled this corner of the yard. There was no path; the whole ground was braided over with briars, and brown with long dead tufts of grass. Twisted old cedars and dark pines grew about the stone wall, and low shoots of the same trees had thrust themselves up through many of the neglected mounds. "*La plus morte mort*," to be buried in such a spot as this.

As they came out of this briery desolation into the wider, better tended plats of those who slept nearer to the church, Christine turned to wait for her companion.

"You had better go on into the house before me," he said. "It may save those within a shock. I will follow you."

"There is no one but my father," she said. "Follow me as quickly as you can. I only need a moment to tell him."

She disappeared through the side gate that led into the Parsonage enclosure. Drawing a long breath, the stranger shifted his heavy burden to the other arm and paused an instant. The spot where he stood was between the garden wall of the Parsonage and the west transept of the church. A long row of little graves lay in the deep shadow that the building threw ; but a broad stream of moonlight fell upon the white marble that terminated them—a higher, fresher mound, with more than one dead wreath upon it. The stranger looked down and read “ Helena ” on it, as he moved away and went through the gate and along the path that led up to the house. Christine was hurrying down the steps to meet him, and a tall man with bent figure and grey hair stood in the doorway with a bewildered and alarmed expression.

“ Let me take him now,” she whispered, putting out her arms.

“ Yes, I believe you may,” he answered, huskily. “ I confess I am a little shaken.”

He leaned for a moment against a pillar that supported the piazza roof, then followed them into the house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RECTOR.

"A lore benignant he hath lived and taught;
To draw mankind to heaven by gentleness
And good example, is his business."

CHAUCER.

At eleven o'clock that evening Dr. Upham sat with his guest by the dining-room fire. Julian, on Christine's bed up-stairs, was lying quietly out of all danger now, they thought. The Rector was talking more than usual, as people generally do after passing safely through a great and sudden peril. More than once he left his chair and walked about the room, talking as he walked.

His companion was not a nervous man; he sat perfectly still and only answered questions; he might have been tired with his long journey and subsequent exertions, but he had not the air at all of being weary. On the contrary, his quiet, observant eyes moved thoughtfully from one thing to another in the room, while he did not seem to lose a word of what Dr. Upham said, and appeared to listen continually for the slightest movement in the room above.

He was a well-made man, in stature a little above middle size; in age, anywhere between twenty-eight and forty; of any country you pleased, and no one guessed the one to which he actually belonged; he was blonde, that might have been German; he was admirably well bred, that looked like French; he was dressed in good style, but with a certain heaviness and roughness that seemed extremely English. There was an in-

describable peculiarity in his literal, close-shaven language, that showed him to have learned it as a foreigner, or to have been long out of the habit of using it familiarly. He seemed a good physician and to have perfect confidence in himself, since, in the present case, which seemed to interest him, he had desired no assistance from the family attendant, and had even said he thought it was unnecessary to have him called; and such was the reliance that his cool, prompt ways inspired, that Dr. Upham countermanded the order he had issued to send for Dr. Thurston, before he had been ten minutes in the house.

"The fact is," he said, walking restlessly up and down past his guest's arm-chair by the fire, "the fact is, my confidence in Dr. Thurston is not entirely established yet; he is but a young man, and has only been practising eighteen months or so. He may do very well, but we miss our old physician sadly. He has been dead almost two years; he attended my eldest daughter during her last illness; this house was about the last he visited. Poor Johnson! it will be long before we can supply his place. This brisk young fellow makes a strange and uncomfortable contrast to him. Where are you practising, Dr. Catherwood?"

The question was abrupt; the stranger gave a little start, perhaps because he was not prepared for anything abrupt from his benevolent, mild-eyed host; but recovering his easy manner almost instantly, he returned:

"Nowhere at present; in fact, I have never practised regularly at any time. I filled a professorship a year or two in D——, but my experience has been principally confined to hospital practice and desultory attendance upon cases that have come particularly to my notice in the neighborhood where I have happened to be staying. I have never desired the confinement of an established professional life. My habits of travel and desire for change unfit me for it; I should find it very irksome."

"That I can understand in early life; but at your age, my dear sir, a man finds his happiness best secured in a settled home."

The good Rector was a little frightened after he found he had said "at your age," and looked with a slight anxiety at his guest; but his guest was beyond the point where people wince at being told what their faces make no secret of; he reassured Dr. Upham by a little smile, and Dr. Upham, who had an idea in his mind that for the moment drove everything else out of it, went on with some animation.

"The world, it is a very good school; I would send a boy into it as I would send him off with his hornbook to the nearest dame a little earlier; but, my dear sir, a man doesn't want to go to school through his whole life. The cream of existence never rises till he settles into quiet; he's not worth much to the world or to himself till he brings his knowledge, his experience into port; he might drift about till doomsday, with the wealth of the Indies all aboard, and nobody be any better for it. The hardest, dullest bit of stone, without a spray of moss upon it; believe me, Dr. Catherwood, repose is as necessary to the last half of a man's life as action is to the first. You understand what I mean by repose—no relation in the world to indolence. One cannot extend himself, his influence and energy, over the surface of the globe; he has wasted himself till he has brought it all to bear upon one spot; the smaller, sometimes it seems, the better chance he has of doing work that can be seen without the microscope."

His listener's eyes were fixed steadily on the burning coals upon the hearth; there was a shade of bitterness about his mouth—a shade so delicate that sometimes it seemed like sadness only; he did not reply when his host paused, nor change his attitude or expression when he resumed his theme. It was not till Dr. Upham, following out the thought upon which he had been enlarging, said: "I infer you are not a man of family?" that he raised his eyes and answered:

"There are few men as free from ties as I am, sir. It is years since I have known anything of family relations; the pleasure of giving protection and of being protected are alike among the memories of my earlier life. At this moment I stand that point of isolation—my fate is necessarily of consequence to no one living but myself."

There was a pause; Dr. Upham began to see he had been almost rude, and his guest began to feel he owed it to his entertainer to tell him something of himself. It cost him an effort, though, to do it; he spoke after a moment without hesitation, but with a precision that showed he was measuring his words.

"I have been so long away from my country, I shall hardly find myself at home even in my native State. I landed at New York last week after an absence from America of thirteen years, and am wandering about now, almost aimlessly, putting off the evil day of a return to Virginia, where there awaits me nothing but the vacant home of my early boyhood. Not one member of the narrow family circle has survived my exile; I cannot hurry back where there is no fireside—only a graveyard. 'Who breaks, pays;' my wanderings have cost me dear."

"Then let me counsel you," said the clergyman, "to pay off quickly and begin upon another score. There is a great deal of time lost often in bickering about charges, and showing why things were not different: avoid that like a wise man; confess you have been an ungrateful wretch, and have cheated your country of your best years; go down to Virginia, pass a few weeks in penitence, and then come back to —, take poor Johnson's pretty cottage there below the mill, step into a handsome practice instantly, assume your place among your countrymen, take hold of the work for which you are so fitted, and lead the quietest, safest, honestest life a man can live. You are too well seasoned to grow rusty; there is never any danger of

rust where there is activity of body with time enough for mental exercise and contact with minds above and below mediocrity, as in such a place as this, within easy reach of the stirring influences of town. Sir, I cannot picture to myself a life more profitable, more comfortable. At your age, and in your position, it would have been seducing to me. I want you to come here ; I am ready to acknowledge, the society of a scholar, and the desire of having again a reliable physician for my family, make me somewhat selfish in my counsel, but I am certain it will be for your own good. I know the place thoroughly ; forty years, forty years, sir, in this very Parsonage. I came here in deacon's orders ; it was a young parish then ; they gave me the Parsonage and three hundred dollars. That was a good deal more than the Parsonage and three hundred dollars would be to-day !

"I built up the parish. I suppose I feel as if they were my children, all of them. I taught a class of boys at first, and stretched out the three hundred in that way. Then I married ; my wife was rich ; we let the little boys go home, you may be sure ! We enlarged the Parsonage, gave the three hundred to the poor, and so it has gone on. I take nothing from my parish but the Parsonage, and that accounts for it that they are not tired of their old minister ; or if they are, that they consent to smother their discontent. Sometimes I think it is a little hard upon them ; I am afraid they have outgrown me ; I have a great mind to let them send for Saul. But then that would almost be suicide ; it would break me up entirely, and it would not be for their good either, that I can really see. Making haste to be rich is the error of our time, Dr. Catherwood, just as much in spiritual as in worldly matters. People are getting impatient of the time required for healthy growth ; they stimulate, they resort to strong devices to improve themselves ; and so a fast religion has come into fashion, and I am out of date. I have thought it over a great deal ; sometimes I decide in favor

of the son of Kish, and sometimes I conclude they need me most when they desire me least.

"But this is neither here nor there : they want a new physician, Dr. Catherwood, whatever we may think about their need of a new clergyman. I was going to tell you it is a sound and well built sort of place, this ; I do not know where you would go to find a better set of people in the main. There are several families where you can feel yourself among companionable minds—a small society of refined and well-bred persons, mixing part of the year in the outside world, and bringing back a good deal of its vigor with them. Then the larger class among whom your labors would call you are of a good, substantial sort ; better, I believe impartially, than the average population of small towns.

"It is not what it was fifty years ago ; we are brought within four hours of the city ; education has been greatly cared for ; those two unsightly factories on the river above the town have sent a great deal of fresh blood through its veins ; they have brought in a less desirable element, it is true, but they have also given a fresh impetus to those of the townspeople who without them would be idle, or who would be forced to go abroad for work. I am old foggy, but I do not care to have the world stand still for all that. I liked it better as it was in my young days ; but I do not desire to put it back to what it was then, knowing that seeing it through young eyes gave it its charm, perhaps ; and there are plenty of young eyes looking at it now.

"Well, — was a village when I came into it ; it is a town now, and they begin to light the streets with gas. It has had the grace to grow up a little out of my sight, however, and leave me and my church almost rural yet ; but it has trebled the value of some acres of mine in the village, and has added a good many thousands to my little Christine's inheritance. That, they might tell you, has reconciled me to the progress we are making ; but I think not.

"You are reflecting upon my proposal, I can see, Dr. Catherwood. I will not press it upon you further, but I shall not cease to hope you will think well of it. There is no need of a decision for the present; look about you for a few months, only bearing this in mind. If you decide favorably upon it, remember my influence will be exerted to the utmost to make your position here all that you could wish immediately, and that the Parsonage will always hold a most grateful welcome for you."

"Your kindness touches me very much, sir," said the guest, rising and holding out his hand to Dr. Upham with a mingled expression of pain and gratitude. "Your confidence in me while still a stranger makes me honor you, and distrust myself and my own ability to meet your generous expectations of me."

"You can never be a stranger in the house that owes you what this does, Dr. Catherwood; and for the rest, I trust to my own instincts. I have not studied men for sixty years in vain, I think. I do not ask any more of you than you choose to tell me; your past history may be a sealed book for ever if you please. All I ask is some assurance of your professional ability, some evidence of your standing among physicians, to build the faith of other men upon, and the matter of formalities is past. You will begin a new score with time, as I have said; and date from the little town of —— in the year one of grace. A stranger! no no, my dear sir. If you had been my bitterest enemy, you would have earned my friendship by your work this night; being but a stranger, you have made yourself my friend for ever, no matter what the future may bring forth.

"When I think," he added, dropping his hand and pacing the floor in agitation, "what a scene this house would have presented at this moment but for you, I cannot control myself; I forget my grey hairs and my many sorrows. I forget the many scenes of dismay and anguish it has presented! I could find

it in my heart to say this would have been a sorrow I could not have borne, used as I am to 'sorrows of all sizes.' Towards old age, my friend, there is a lack of strength; my heart is weak towards poor Helena's boy; he is the last link that binds me to the beloved past. My little girl is the child of my sad old age; Julian is the souvenir of my happy prime. I love his mother in him—his mother, the first-born in this old house, the beauty, the darling of my home! The law of primogeniture has its seat beyond the reach of legislation. Poor, poor Helena! A blighted, strange career! She was but little comfort to me; rather a constant pain; but I hold her memory dearer than a world of comfort and prosperity; I love her boy, inheritor of her many faults, as I have loved nothing since my youth. She worshipped him; I say it with a sigh; the mother, in her, swallowed up all other feelings; she would have died, I almost think she did die for him; and to have lost him so, to have had him perish so soon after she had left him with us, would have broken my old heart, shattered my old brain. God has made you the instrument of this great mercy to our family, and it is not possible we ever should forget it."

There was a long silence; the clergyman paced up and down the room; the stranger sat by the fireside, his face shaded by his hand. The lamp was growing dim, the wood had fallen into ashes on the hearth; presently the clock struck twelve.

The clergyman started and glanced up at it.

"You must forgive me," he said, as he took a candle from the sideboard and lighted it at the fire. "Your room is the right hand front-room on the floor above, opposite the one where the boy lies. Perhaps you will look in at him as you go up."

Julian was in a quiet sleep; his young aunt was sitting motionless beside the bed.

Indeed she sat so nearly all the night. She watched the new-comer go into that dark chamber with a shiver, wondering if he did not feel as he entered it that death had been a guest

there once. The great canopied bed and silent walls told nothing to him, perhaps, of what they said to her ; but as the night wore on, she sat and watched in a sort of fascination the bright streak of light under the door that for hours and hours did not disappear.

CHAPTER V.

DR. CATHERWOOD.

"Who rides his sure and easy trot,
While the world now rides by, now lags behind."

HERBERT.

IN the early part of May there was a reign of carpenters, painters, and house-cleaners at the little cottage beyond the mill; in the latter part of the same month there was a restoration of order and tranquillity, following the arrival of a middle-aged, energetic woman, who made herself the terror of the dilatory artists, and had the happiness of welcoming her master to a habitable house.

There was soon a name upon the long-closed door that the boys spelled over on their way to school, and the villagers mis-called in every imaginable manner:

DR. EDWARD CATHERWOOD.

The stable had been put in better order than the house, and in it was installed a fine, high-stepping horse, that the doctor drove before his buggy, and a light-built, pretty mare, which he rode more frequently in his errands out into the country.

For the doctor had errands in many different directions, notwithstanding the predictions of little Dr. Thurston, who was in a measure, beside himself, at the intrusion. He gave up his pew in the church at the first receipt of the news, and took a "sitting" in the Baptist edifice, by way of stabbing Dr. Upham in his tenderest vein; he canvassed the country zealously, and blackened the new-comer's character with too visi-

ble a spleen ; he worked himself quite lean and yellow during the early spring, and was laid up with a bilious fever before the new doctor actually took possession of his quarters. All of which militated very much against him. He had aroused public curiosity to a high point ; and before he was in the field again the whole town had taken occasion to have an illness, and had sent for Dr. Catherwood to see what he was like.

He was like something so very easy and pleasant, that they all wanted an excuse to employ him constantly ; and the yellow little practitioner met so small a degree of enthusiasm on his first round of visits, that it threw him back a whole fortnight in his convalescence.

Besides his pleasant and easy manner, and the prestige of being a bad fellow, the new doctor had in his favor the patronage of those few families who constituted the polite society of —, and that made him much desired by those who were outside of that society. He became, in fact, a greater favorite than suited him exactly ; it was not altogether the high virtue that it seemed, when he praised Dr. Thurston's practice among his temporary patients, and turned them back to his care the very moment he was able to ride out.

Dr. Upham's advice appeared, on the whole, to have been judicious ; there seemed every reason to believe that Dr. Catherwood had done well to come to anchor in the little town of —. The slight shade of bitterness that, on that first visit, Dr. Upham had fancied he noticed on his face, had now quite passed away. The good old man began to doubt whether it ever had been there ; whether his guest had a history, after all ; and whether he had not been mistaken in fancying him a disappointed and world-weary man. He talked very freely of his travels, his foreign education, the shortness of the period he had spent in his own country between boyhood and manhood ; but he was of that rare order of talkers who interest without ever being personal. He seldom talked of people, even the

people among whom he practised every day, although he acted always upon a most accurate knowledge of their characters.

The Parsonage became his second home; no companion seemed to suit Dr. Upham half as well. A day seldom passed when he did not take some meal with the family, or spend an hour or two on the piazza smoking with the Rector; while Christine worked or read in one of the windows, and Julian played about the garden, now in the full bloom of summer. If he ever failed to come, Julian was certain to be sent down to the cottage with a note, saying that that box of books had come from town; or, there was a fine saddle of mutton for dinner; or, Dr. Upham was out of tobacco, and begged he would bring some up for him in the evening.

The Parsonage certainly was a pleasant house to be at home in; few men could have resisted its attractions, coming from however comfortable a bachelor establishment. The ways were old-fashioned, but they were of the best fashion of a very sensible day. The table was always admirable and well ordered. If the house had been gloomy a few years ago, that was wearing off. No house can be gloomy long with a fresh young girl and a noisy little boy among its articles of furniture. Christine had companions of her own age now who came sometimes to see her; Julian was hand-in-glove with every rascal in the neighborhood, and Dr. Catherwood's presence always had an invigorating effect upon the Rector.

But beyond the matter of hospitality, Julian's illnesses were continually calling him to the house; Dr. Upham would have considered half his income well laid out in securing such a medical attendant for the boy. He was a child requiring the most constant care; he did not seem at all to outgrow his early delicacy; any over-excitement or imprudence was invariably succeeded by convulsive attacks of a most alarming nature. His nervous system seemed always in the same excited state; his wildness and restlessness were beyond control; a whole

nursery full of ordinary children would have been an easy charge compared with that of this elfish, untamed boy. If, as it is said, the real education of a child is accomplished within the first three years of his existence, Julian's strange, wilful temper was not to be wondered at; but upon merely physical grounds, his grandfather accounted for all, and excused all tenderly. Such a sensitive organization as his could not be subjected to ordinary discipline; he must not be thwarted; as his strength increased, and he outgrew his present difficulties, he would learn to govern himself and be like other children.

To all of which Christine assented silently.

Julian, though looking scarcely eight, was now eleven. He was very delicately made, exquisitely little, with the fairest skin and very large blue eyes. He still wore his yellow curls down to his waist, and was yet dressed in very childish style, in the rich clothes his poor mother had brought with her from abroad. There was a trunk full of embroideries not yet made up, velvets and cashmeres still to be braided and cut out; plumes, buckles, and mosaics, fit for the wardrobe of a little prince. Christine had charming taste, and worked her pretty fingers weary on his clothes; and the result was, the disedification of the critical portion of the congregation, and the clamorous condemnation of the extravagant ways of the parson's family by the town at large. So little is the popular judgment worth; this work was a religious duty with Christine, and the Rector could not have told whether his little grandson wore linsey-woolsey or Lyons velvet.

Master Julian never thought of attending to what his grandfather advised; he scouted the influence of Christine; he bullied openly his *bonne*; he carried fire and sword into the kitchen; only of Dr. Catherwood did he stand in any awe. The Doctor alone could induce him to take his medicines; he never dared to disobey the Doctor's injunction to lie still and to stay in the house. And though he never showed the least affection for

any living thing, his interest in this new member of the family circle bore more resemblance to that sentiment than any other he ever had exhibited. He was willing to come into the house when Dr. Catherwood was there; and though he never expressed any pleasure when he came, or any regret when he went, and generally refused to kiss him, and often pouted when he spoke to him, it was assented to by all, Dr. Catherwood was the only person who could do anything with Julian.

CHAPTER VI.

EARLY SUMMER.

"Heaven's soft azure in her eye is seen;
She seems a rose-bud when it first receives
The genial sun in its expanding leaves."

It was about half an hour before tea-time, a fine July afternoon. Dr. Catherwood came in at the gate of the Parsonage and walked slowly up the boxwooded path to the piazza. There was no one on the piazza; Julian's hoop and a muddy little pair of overshoes lay at one end, but no Julian was in sight. Dr. Upham's hat and cane were gone from the hall table, and there was no one in the parlor.

So, thought the new-comer, I am here alone till tea-time. The wind was waving slightly the white muslin curtain at the western window, and on the stiff, high-backed, mahogany chair beside it lay a work-basket and a book, the reader's place marked by a handful of mignonette. He lifted up the piece of muslin that lay in the pretty little basket, a half finished embroidered shirt of Julian's, and looked at it thoughtfully for a moment, then turned over the pages of the book. It was "Evangeline;" he put it in his pocket and walked towards the door, stopping on his way to take a cigar out of a box upon the bookcase in the corner, and a match from the safe beside it. The back and front hall-doors stood open; he lit his cigar as he passed out upon the back porch and down the steps into the garden.

There was a long walk passing under a grape-vine arbor down the centre of the garden; on one side were flowerbeds full of old-fashioned, sweet-smelling flowers; on the other, a grass-plat planted with trees and shrubs, extending to another

walk, bordered by a hedge of box that ran along the whole side of the enclosure, next the churchyard wall. Below the garden and the shrubbery, at the termination of the covered walk, there was an orchard, not separated from the garden by a fence, but extending back for about an acre to the stone wall that enclosed the whole of the Parsonage grounds. The trees were old, but most of them were full of fruit. The grass was short and even; and around the centre of one tree, just at the termination of the vine-covered walk, there was a circular bench to which the smoker made his way. An opening had been cut in the branches facing the walk; on all other sides the boughs drooped quite down upon the ground.

It was a favorite after-dinner lounge of his; he threw himself upon the bench, resting his elbow on the little table by it, and drew the book out from his pocket. He had not read many minutes, however, before he looked up, distracted by a flutter of white garments down the path. It was Christine coming towards him with an open note in her hand. She paused at the entrance of his retreat, and looked in at him smiling.

"I missed my book," she said, "and was certain you had gone off with it."

"Well, you can have it," he said, making room for her on the bench beside him, and taking the cigar out of his mouth.

"Oh, I have no doubt, if I wanted it," she answered; "but I don't."

"There is an excitement," he said, looking at her as he laid down his book. "What has arrived? Tell me all about it?"

"Oh, nothing of moment," she answered, with a little laugh, pushing aside the branches and coming to the seat beside him.

She was dressed in white, with a pale-green bow of ribbon at her throat; her shoulders, which were beautifully formed and white, showed through the transparent muslin of her dress; and her full, thin sleeves did not hide the roundness and fairness of her arms. Her skin was ordinarily pale, but was tinged now

with a faint pink, and her dark-brown eyes had an unusual brightness in them. Her forehead was low, and her bright auburn hair, showing a gleam of reddish gold in every wave, was fastened in a heavy knot at the back of her well shaped head. This last year had developed more beauty in her than her childhood promised. People were beginning to say, Why, that little Upham girl is going to be pretty, after all.

Dr. Catherwood did not look at her again as she sat down beside him, but said, knocking the ashes from his cigar and putting a card in the book where he had left off reading:

"Pale-green is your color; did you know it?"

"Is it? Well—I think you have forgotten what you asked me to tell you."

"Oh, no; I have not. Who is the note from?"

"Why," she said, "it is from the Hill—from Mrs. Roger Sherman, who has just come from abroad, you know. She has been away for three years and more; the house has been shut up; and she is going to give a party now. She is always giving parties, I believe. And she has invited me. I wonder how she came to think of it; she is very kind."

"Very kind," repeated Dr. Catherwood, with a little smile.

"Why, you see, she never used to invite me; and I don't believe she ever spoke to me in her life."

"But you are a young lady now, you know," said Dr. Catherwood.

"Seventeen, next December," she answered, thoughtfully.

"Yes, that is grown up, almost."

"And you will be invited to parties often, now, of course," he continued. "It is time you began to think about it."

She gave a nervous little laugh.

"Do you know, I never was invited to a party before in my life. I don't know whether I am pleased or not."

"Oh, you are pleased, take my word for it," said her companion. "It has almost turned your head."

"But I don't know what to do about it—had I better go? And must I write an answer to the note? I haven't an idea what to say. And I really don't know what to wear, if I should go. You see there is nobody to tell me about anything."

Her companion dropped his light tone when she said this, and taking the note, glanced over it, saying, "Let us see. Yes, it requires an answer, either way: we will write it when we go into the house. About accepting—I cannot see any reason why you should not accept. Your father will say yes, no doubt, and I think you will enjoy it."

"But then—there is nobody to take me! I hadn't thought of that!"

"True, you could hardly go alone; how about your black-eyed friend, the young Miss I saw here with you last week? Will she not be going, and cannot her mother chaperone you, too?"

"Maddy's mother, Mrs. Clybourne, you mean? Do you think she would object?"

"I cannot see on what ground. And then you might ask her what you had better wear, perhaps."

"Why," she said, looking uneasy, "I don't know her well enough for that. I should not like to talk about such things to her."

Dr. Catherwood repressed a smile at the innocence that feared to obtrude the subject of dress on a lady of Mrs. Clybourne's established worldliness; he was sorry she ever had to learn that its discussion filled the nights and days of at least one-half of her own sex.

"You have another dress like this," he said, touching the sleeve that lay beside him on the table.

"Oh, yes, I have a muslin—yes—thinner than this, low neck. Why, perhaps, it will be just the thing. I ought to wear low neck, ought I not?"

"I suppose so," he said, biting his lip and drumming for a

moment on the table. "All young girls do, I believe, though the dress you have on is prettier, to my fancy."

"Oh, this is not nice enough. You will see how much better the other one will look; and you like light green. I have thought of something charming. I have it all. It will be very pretty! I should like to know whether Maddy is going to wear white. Will they dance, do you suppose, Dr. Catherwood? It is such a pity that I don't know how. I wonder if any one will ask me?"

"What shall you say if any one should, by any chance?" he said, looking at her with a smile.

"Why, that I was very sorry, but that I never had learned how, I suppose. I have no doubt they will think I am very stupid. Do you know, I am always afraid of young ladies from the city? Even Maddy, I believe, is very soon tired of talking to me. Perhaps she will think more of me when she finds I am going to Mrs. Sherman's. We shall have something to talk about afterwards, too; and the trouble always has been, we did not have anything that we both cared about."

"Yes; and the more you have in common with Miss Madeline, the less you will have in common with me; Miss Madeline's gain will be my loss; do you see that?"

"Why no, I do not see it. I don't understand, exactly."

"It is not necessary that you should. I believe I was thinking aloud just then. By the way, what has become of Julian? I haven't seen him all the afternoon."

"Julian? I don't know. In the barn with Crescens, I believe," she answered, in a changed voice, subsiding presently in silence.

"Well, what is it?" said her companion, watching her quietly for a few moments. The color had left her cheek, the animation was gone from her eyes; she sat twisting the note between her fingers with a thoughtful, troubled look. "Nothing," she said, rising. "I must go and look for him; I believe I had forgotten all about him."

"You must not go," he said, "till you have told me why you look so serious."

"Why—I do not know," she said. "Only, on the whole, I think I had better not go to the party. Julian might be ill; I have never been away from him a whole evening yet. I should not be home till one or two o'clock, perhaps; and Crescens is good for nothing. She never knows what to do in one of his attacks. She is a perfect stupid; I never should forgive myself, you see."

"That is all very foolish," he said, firmly. "The sky might fall, you know. I shall not think much of your common sense if you speak in that way again. Julian is perfectly safe with his grandfather and a house full of servants—good as servants ordinarily are. You must not take such care upon you; it is an absurd thing at your age. I have been wanting to speak to you about it, and this has brought me to it. You take too much the care of that boy. It has injured your elasticity already. You are an incongruous mixture of child and woman. There is no justice in your being sacrificed. If Crescens is not capable of taking charge of him, some one else must be engaged who is, and you must cease to feel the constant care of him. I intend to speak to Dr. Upham immediately about it."

"That you must not do," she said, earnestly. "I shall never forgive you if you say anything to my father. Crescens cannot be sent away; there are reasons for it, and I cannot speak of them. Understand, Dr. Catherwood, you will make me very—unhappy—almost angry, if you speak about it. I choose to take care of Julian; it is my *choice*, if there were nothing more."

"Understand, Miss Upham, I *shall* speak about it if you give me any more occasion. Let there be no more nonsense about staying away from Mrs. Sherman's, not trusting to Crescens, sitting up all night, stooping over sewing all day, on account of this boy Julian. You will be sent away to boarding-school

some fine day ; you are putting on the airs of a young woman quite too soon !”

There was a flash and flutter among the branches ; Christine had darted away, a flush of indignation on her cheek ; and Dr. Catherwood, watching her disappear through the trees, said to himself with a low laugh as he resumed his book : “ The pretty little innocent !”

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE NURSERY.

— "The green
And growing leaves of seventeen
Are round her ;—and half hid, half seen,
A violet flower ;
Nursed by the virtues she hath been
From childhood's hour."

HALLCK.

DR. CATHERWOOD was smoking a solitary cigar in the porch of his solitary little cottage ; the mill-stream which ran below the garden was whispering to itself in the twilight, and the water rushing over the dam was throwing abroad a lulling music. It was the evening of the entertainment at the Hill ; Dr. Catherwood had taken dinner at the Parsonage, had assured himself of the success of his plans for his young favorite, and was at that very moment thinking of her innocent excitement with a smile of pleasure. He had negotiated with Mrs. Clybourne for her protection, had made her happy with the present of a beautiful bouquet, dictated the little note of ceremony, and had represented to her father that he must encourage her in every way.

He almost thought he would go to the Hill himself a little while and see how she enjoyed it, and make sure also that the city-bred young ladies did not throw her in the shade. He appeared to debate the question for some time ; it required a good deal of effort to bring him to the point of getting up and throwing his cigar away, for he was rather an indolent man, it was considered, and he had had a day of hard riding too in a dozen different ways about the country. He leaned for a few

moments against the vine-covered pillar of the porch after he had thrown away his cigar, listened to the rushing of the water over the dam, said heigho ! with a sort of sigh as he turned into the house and hunted about the hall to find a light. He was just entering his bedchamber, an apartment on the ground-floor opposite his office, when the little gate opened and some one came running down the path.

It was the pretty waitress from the Parsonage.

"Well, what is it, Ann?" he said, meeting her at the door.

"Master Julian"—she began, and then stopped quite out of breath.

"He is ill? Very well; I will go up immediately."

Dr. Catherwood evidently was not an indolent man when there was anything to be done. He did not wait for his horse, but striking into the lane below the mill, took the short path to the Parsonage, reaching it some time before Ann the waitress did.

He went directly in, and up the stairs to the room where Julian slept. It was a large, airy room that opened out of Christine's, which had always been "the nursery" when there were children in the family to inhabit it. One way of entering it was from the hall, behind the stairs; the shortest was through Christine's room. Dr. Catherwood went in this way, not stopping to think till he was in the room, where a couple of tall candles were burning below the glass, and a white dress lay upon the bed, with a little pair of slippers by them. The bouquet stood on the window-sill; two or three white skirts were flung upon a chair.

He pushed open the nursery door. Crescens, with her usual dull and stolid face, was carrying away a bath-tub, while Julian was lying wrapped in blankets on Christine's lap beside the bed. Christine's face expressed relief as she caught sight of the new-comer, who approached without any undue haste, and taking the child's wrist, said in a commonplace tone as he sat down upon the bed:

"Well, Julian, my boy, what's the matter this time?"

Julian fretted and turned his face away, but did not attempt to take away his hand.

"You'd better let me put him on the bed," said the Doctor, rising and lifting him into his place. "You have given him one of those powders?"

"Two; he has just taken the second one."

"That's all right. When did it come on?"

"Half an hour ago. I saw before ten he was not well, he was so very fretful; he had been off somewhere with Harry Gilmore. I had begun to dress, when Crescens called me——"

"It is a trifle," said the Doctor, looking at him attentively. "But you may go and mix that other powder for me, in case he is not quieted."

The medicine was in another room, and Christine was absent several minutes. When she came back, the Doctor said, taking out his watch:

"Now you had better go and finish dressing; you will not be ready."

She started. "You do not suppose I would go away?" she said, half reproachfully, half incredulously.

"Of course. Why not? Julian is well enough. There is not the least danger of a return at present. He needs you no more to-night than always, and you know we have agreed he does *not* need you always. Remember our conversation the other evening in the garden. I shall certainly have to interfere——"

"You are unreasonable," she began, with flashing eyes, but her companion rising and taking her by the hand led her to the door of her own room.

"Why take things *au tragique*, Christine?" he said, half closing the door between them and the nursery. "You know I am as careful of the boy as you are. If he needed you, I should let you stay. To pacify you, I will stay myself and watch him."

Christine bit her lips to keep back the tears, and resolutely said she would not leave him.

"Well, then, I have had all my trouble for nothing," he said. "I have been pleasing myself with thinking how pretty you were going to look, and how much you would enjoy yourself."

There was a pause.

"You will be sorry to-morrow. You will think, what a silly girl I was. Come! I will make a compromise with you. You get yourself ready and go with Mrs. Clybourne, who comes for you at half-past nine. I will stay by Julian till twelve, and then come for you myself; for I suppose Mrs. Clybourne will not be ready to come away before two or three. That will make you absent less than three hours in all. Does not that please you? You are ungrateful if it does not, and there can be no possibility of pleasing you."

Christine shook her head, but it was finally agreed upon, and Dr. Catherwood shut the door and went back to Julian's bed, leaving her nothing but to comply.

At half-past nine a carriage rolled up to the gate. Christine knocked at the nursery door and whispered good-night faintly. Dr. Catherwood, who was dropping some medicine into a glass, only answered *au revoir* in the same tone, and did not open it. It was at the door leading into the hall at which she had knocked; after a few moments there came another little tap.

"Well?" said the medical attendant.

"Can't I come in?" she asked in a whisper.

"Why, no," he said, in a low tone, going towards the door but not opening it. "Julian is lying very quietly, and it is not worth while to rouse him."

There was a little pause of hesitation, and then with a sigh she moved away. He motioned Crescens to take his place by the bed.

"Oh, I see what it is," he said, opening the door and following her down the hall. "You want to know whether you look pretty. Come under the light and let me see."

"I was not thinking about that at all," she said, coloring.

Dr. Catherwood had taken her hand to bring her to where the light fell upon her, but as they reached it he dropped her hand suddenly and drew back.

Was he disappointed? She was lovely. Her dress was beautifully fine and white, graceful and full in its sweep about her slight, well rounded figure; her hair was classically simple; her eyes and cheeks bright with excitement; on her white arms and neck she wore bracelets and a necklace of carved malachite in Etruscan setting.

She had not expected him to admire her, but she felt vaguely pained at his look of disappointment. "He had forgotten that my hair was red, perhaps," she thought, instinctively drawing back from the light. Her companion noticed her movement and tried to recover his usual tone, as he said:

"Your dress is very pretty. Mrs. Clybourne will not have cause to be ashamed of you."

But the tone was not a natural one; the manner was a mark of something she did not understand, and Christine went down the stairs perplexed and heavy-hearted.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SOUND OF REVELRY BY NIGHT.

"Ne in her speech, ne in her haviour
Is lightnesse seene, or looser vanitie ;
But gracious womanhood and gravitie,
Above the reason of her youthly yeares."

SPENSER.

DR. CATHERWOOD walked up and down the hall with a steady, even tread for a long time after Christine left him and went down to Mrs. Clybourne. He heard, or perhaps he did not hear, the gate close and the carriage drive away ; he did not seem to notice Crescens glowering at him from the door of Julian's room ; it was only a fretful cry from the boy himself at last that roused him, and with a slight start, throwing off his revery, he entered the room and went up to the bed with even more than his usual kindness and good-humor. But when the child slept the revery returned ; he sat beside him like a statue, with eyes of stone fixed upon the ground. The servant had to speak twice who came to announce, at half-past eleven, that his horse was at the door.

The moon was just rising as he drove within sight of the house on the Hill ; the lights from it were all shining through the trees, and the music came out from all its open doors and windows. Upon the east piazza, where the moon was already shining, there were plenty of imprudent dancers walking ; the western one, deeply in the shade, was vacant. Calling a servant to his horse, Dr. Catherwood went up these steps, glanced into the hall, and then, through an open window, looked into the parlor. It was a perfect "rose-bud garden of girls."

Dr. Catherwood said to himself: "There are at least twenty pretty women in those two rooms, but the minister's little daughter is the prettiest of all."

The minister's little daughter seemed to have forgotten the heartache of two hours ago; her face was radiant with pleasure; her youth and light-heartedness spoke in every movement; she was enjoying a rare, beautiful, brief moment that could not, on its nature, come again. Pride, envy, and ambition had not yet crept in; admiration only meant kindness, pleasure only excited an unconscious gratitude.

A great many eyes were on her; Mrs. Sherman, who had no children of her own, and was always trying to fill the void by petting other people's, was praising her to every one, and bringing a great deal of notice on her. The city-bred young ladies were looking at her with no affection, and the city-bred young gentlemen were looking at her with a great deal. She was not dancing, for that excellent reason she had given Dr. Catherwood; but every good-looking man in the room had asked her to, and more than one had given up the pleasure of that exercise for the gratification of talking to her and doing his part towards spoiling the innocence that charmed him.

Dr. Catherwood watched her for some time with a curious, half-uneasy look; she was walking up and down the long apartment with an admirer on each side; his fine bouquet was irreverently handled by the more nervous talker of the two; one was babbling flattery, the other was looking it; more than once in their walk they were interrupted by some new introduction, petition for a dance, or officious offer of civility.

"Pshaw!" said Dr. Catherwood half aloud, "they'll spoil the child by all this nonsense;" and with an involuntary impatience he pulled the curtain aside and stepped in upon the light and pleasant scene. The three he had been watching with so little approbation were approaching at the moment that he made his *entrée*; Christine dropped the arm of her companion, and

started forward, saying, "Oh, there is Dr. Catherwood!" in a naïve, earnest tone, while a shade came over her face with the memory of the sick room at home which the sight of him recalled.

Dr. Catherwood bit his lip; it seemed a little hard, with all the pains he had taken for her pleasure, that he must be the skeleton at the feast, and bring the first shade over her happy face

"Julian is no worse?" she said, hurriedly and anxiously.

"No worse," he said, with a smile; "I came to tell you you had better stay and come back with Mrs. Clybourne."

"No," said Christine, with a visible effort. "I am quite ready to go now, only I did not think it could be twelve o'clock!"

"Of course not, Cinderella; but it is, and after."

"Where is Mrs. Sherman? I want to say good-night."

"To say good-night!" exclaimed the forgotten holder of the fine bouquet in a tone of deep reproach, while the other starting forward, said, "Miss Upham! You are not in earnest! Has anything occurred?"

He looked towards Dr. Catherwood, gave a start, and exclaimed in a tone of great astonishment:

"Is it possible, Ned——"

The sentence was not finished; a quick look from Dr. Catherwood checked him; he extended his hand with an inquiring look. "I should as soon have thought of meeting the Khan of Tartary here as you," he said, recovering himself.

"You cannot be more surprised than I am," returned the Doctor. "I had no idea you were in this country."

"We are old fellow-travellers, Miss Upham," said Colonel Steele, in an explanatory manner, turning to Christine. "Two such wandering spirits, we ought not to be surprised at meeting anywhere while we are confined to the same planet."

"If this encounter is to be as brief as our last one was, I must improve it," said Dr. Catherwood. "Miss Upham will excuse us, I am sure, for a few moments."

He took Colonel Steele's arm, and they walked half a dozen times up and down the hall, talking in low voices; then came back to the window where Christine stood waiting for them, their places well supplied by some fresh flatterers.

"I am quite ready to go," she said, the moment they approached. She was quite sobered, quite unradiant. She was not hearing half that her admirers said. "I assure you it is unnecessary," he returned, looking at her critically.

"I want to go," she said, simply.

"Principally because you wish to stay, I suppose," he answered.

"Oughtn't I to go and tell Mrs. Clybourne?" she asked.

"Why, yes, if you mean to go with me."

"Then won't you take me to her?"

The manner in which the young belle left her admirers was quite a study; they felt themselves thrown to an immeasurable distance; even the most assured of them lacked the confidence to follow her and remonstrate with her on her going. They felt the chill of her preoccupied, simple manner more than any haughtiness.

Mrs. Clybourne smiled good-humoredly when she told her why she went; she was a woman of the world from her youth, and she evidently thought Dr. Catherwood very willing to get the young *débutante* away from her admirers.

Maddy said, "What! going now?" from over her partner's shoulder as she was whirled past her down the room; while Mrs. Sherman left a group of dowagers to remonstrate openly against her leaving.

Mrs. Sherman was the dread of all timid and easily embarrassed people; she had not much tact, but a very strong will, and a great desire that everybody should be pleased and entertained exactly as she wanted them to be. She spent her life in trying to amuse herself, and she seized greedily upon any one that promised her the least excitement. She always had some

one to protect and patronize, somebody about her to make her feel as if she were doing good—an artist with long hair, a poet, or an unremunerated author of poor prose. She always had one or more young girls staying with her, which made her house attractive; and if the young girls did not mind being praised, petted, and patronized in the most public manner—schemed about, made conspicuous, and finally married off to some of her *protégés*, it was all very well.

Mrs. Clybourne being a widow, and living on a stated income, the statement of which was very brief, was prepared to welcome very gladly Mrs. Sherman's protection and favor for Madeline, now just ready for society. Madeline, consequently, had been sent up to the Hill continually on amiable errands since Mrs. Sherman had returned, and had succeeded in making herself quite a favorite with her. Therefore it was with very great regret she saw the impression that the little girl from the Parsonage was making. Mrs. Sherman certainly was taking her up violently; everything conspired to make her enthusiastically *épriée*. She had not seen anything so fresh and innocent in years she declared; she always had doated on hair of just that shade; she liked nothing so much as a girl without a mother; and she was, at just that period, intemperately high-church. Dr. Upham had baptized her, or married her, or something of that sort; he was associated with the happiest days of her life; she should lose no time in renewing her old friendship for him. Besides, Christine was an heiress, she soon learned; and though that took a little from the merit of the act, it would make bringing her out a much more interesting task. She would save the girl from being sacrificed to some clownish fellow, and would give her a thousand advantages which she could not otherwise have hoped for. "*Ma petite violette!*" she exclaimed from underneath her muslin roses; "*tu ne sera pas toujours cachée dans la campagne!*"

Dr. Catherwood saw the situation instantly; he felt he should

have done better to have dictated "Miss Upham regrets extremely," when this mighty huntress's invitation came. There was an end of pristine simplicity and content in the old ways at the Parsonage. "Just as all other women are," insipid beyond expression, when she learned all that Madeline Clybourne and the rest could teach her.

Dr. Catherwood was almost brusque when he replied to Mrs Sherman's protests about taking Christine away; he thought it in very bad taste on her part to say so much about it, and wondered that Christine could endure so many caresses and such open adulation from her.

"I shall certainly come to-morrow morning, dear, and see if your father really sent this hard-hearted gentleman after you. I can't see how he could have been so cruel!"

When they were out in the moonlight fairly on their way home, Dr. Catherwood recovered his good temper, or at least the appearance of it; but Christine was very silent, absorbed in her own thoughts.

"So you have had a pleasant evening?" he said by and by, stooping forward to pull her white dress from the wheel. "Did any one ask you to dance?"

"Oh, yes, of course; a great many."

"Why of course? You thought they might not, you know."

"Well, Mrs. Sherman told them to, I believe. I never met any one exactly like Mrs. Sherman."

"No? Why, I know a dozen people like her. You propose to be very fond of her, no doubt."

"No, I had not thought of it."

"Still, you like her, I am sure."

"She's extremely kind to me," said Christine, relapsing into silence.

"Then there's my friend Colonel Steele; what did you think of him?" resumed her companion, after a pause.

"Oh, he was very pleasant," she answered, brightening. "I

think I liked him better than any one; though, to tell you the truth, I believe I liked them all. I never had so much pleasure in my life before. I wish I could go to a party every night. The music, Dr. Catherwood, was it not delightful? I would give anything to dance. And the dresses were so pretty! Why, I could hardly speak when I first came down into the parlors, everything was so new and strange. Don't you think that is a beautiful house? It is the finest one I ever saw; the piazza is so broad. Oh, how little the one at home seems after it! I wonder Mrs. Sherman can go away to live. By the way, Mrs. Sherman says she used to know my mother, and—and—Helena my sister."

"Ah!"

"She saw Helena once, at some great ball in Paris, the winter she was married. She says she was so beautiful, every one was talking of her. And what was very strange, she wore white, and these same ornaments I have on to-night. Mrs. Sherman says they were so striking she never had forgotten them. Helena gave them to me when she first came home; I think she did not like them. She packed all her other jewelry away for Julian. I would give anything to have seen her when she was beautiful. We have no picture of her anywhere. It is so dreadful to die and leave no shadow, no material souvenir of the body we inhabited; it is very treacherous to trust only to the memories of those who have once loved us—people will forget—it is such a short time to live——"

There was a long silence. It was these thoughts that had sobered the young girl so suddenly; she hardly realized that she had given them utterance, or mentioned her sister's name for the first time to her companion.

"I am not in the least like her, they say; not a look of her about my face, nor Julian's, either. It is as if she were gone for ever; he has almost forgotten her, I sometimes think; and I find myself forgetting, though I try so hard to keep her in my

mind. My father is the only one that has her clear and constant picture in his thoughts. Don't you think him changed and older lately? But I forgot; you never knew him before she died."

"I do not think him changed since I came here to live. What makes you fear he is?"

"Nothing; I had not thought of it; but Mrs. Sherman says she passed him the other day upon the road, and never would have known him if Madeline had not told her. She had heard all about Helena, and she says so much trouble has almost killed him, she is sure. She asked me all about—all about Julian and our family matters, exactly as if she had known me all her life. I suppose it is because I have seen so few strangers, but it made me very uncomfortable. I shall get used to it, however, I suppose."

"Let me advise you never to feel comfortable in the discussion of family matters with a stranger. Mrs. Sherman is a stranger to you; her catechism was ill bred. I do not want to know that you ever are used to such things, Christine. I do not want you to be intimate with Mrs. Sherman. I should be sorry that Madeline even were your confidant. Promise me to tell nothing to her, and to Mrs. Sherman, and to the hundred others who may soon surround you, but what you might tell out in the hearing of the world. Nothing of your home relations, nothing of your feelings, nothing of your heart, Christine. Can't you make me your friend, as far as such a friend is necessary? There is no one who cares more for your happiness than I do, no one who is more interested in all the trifles that concern you; and if you will be contented with my sympathy, and accept sometimes of my advice, it may save you from a good deal of trouble and regret for indiscretions."

"It is not much of a compliment to say I like you better than I like them; but all the idea I have of a friend comes from you, and I never shall talk to any one but you. Why should

it ever be different? There are three people that I never want to be away from, you and my father and Julian. The others are all very well, but I can do without them."

There was a little silence as they drove under the shade of the elm-trees and turned into the broad street on which the church and the Parsonage were built.

"I shall not forget," said Dr. Catherwood, as he took her hand to lift her to the ground at the Parsonage gate.

"Nor I," said Christine. "So good-night."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLYBOURNES.

"Proud Malsie is in the wood
Walking so early ;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me ?"
SCOTT.

"JULIAN is much better this morning," said Christine, rising to meet Dr. Catherwood as he came in.

"I am very glad of it," he returned, professionally, standing still at the parlor door with his hat in his hand, having made his salutations to the party in the parlor. "I suppose I may go up?"

"If you please," said Christine, sitting down.

She was environed by more visitors than she had ever had to entertain in her life before at one time. There was Mrs. Sherman, talking with the peculiar enthusiasm of a pious woman of fashion to the old Rector ; Madeline Clybourne, playing with the feather of her round hat and sparkling with wit and vivacity ; Colonel Steele, looking very handsome and using his fine eyes dangerously ; and the chattering bouquet-holder of last night, who named himself Leslie, and who was by trade an author. Both these gentlemen were staying at the Hill, and had come with Mrs. Sherman and Madeline in the fine open carriage which now stood at the door.

Christine looked rather pale, and not nearly so pretty as she had looked the night before ; but neither of the gentlemen seem-

ed disillusionized. "All is fine that is fit." The droop of the lily is one of its charms.

There was not a trace of languor or weariness about Madeline; her eyes were merry, her cheeks glowed with color. Of course she knew that she looked well; she had put on her white picquet dress that morning, knowing that she looked her very best in it, and had put her coral earrings in, with the strong conviction that the Hill carriage would drive up to the gate some time in the course of the morning.

She had heard so much of beauty all her life, she felt a thrill of satisfaction every time she looked into the glass; the strong rush of youthful happiness was carrying away with it the unlovely vice of vanity that bubbled up occasionally into sight; rather a pretty sparkle now, but a deadly taint, "a woe for future years," when the current should be slower and the fountain low.

Madeline was not a foolish child; she had great talent, great beauty, and a soul fit for very noble things. Neither was Madeline's mother a foolish woman, as the world counts foolishness; she had great energy, wonderful administrative ability, strong affection for her children, and very correct ideas of her duty on most questions. She was almost a religious woman; she was not far from being what she ought to be. She had brought up her children with the greatest care; she had not spared herself, had worked day and night to make up the stinginess of fate to them, and give them the advantages they would have had if their father had lived and prospered. A miracle of cleverness she had appeared to those who knew the slenderness of her resources; her boy had had the best education that the country could afford him; her eldest girl had been brought before the world with a flourish of trumpets that might have heralded the entrance of a beauty and an heiress.

How the Clybournes kept such a brave front to the world, however, was a wonder only to those who did not understand

the oneness of purpose, the strong ambition of the mother. Indeed, she had little assistance from those for whom she worked. The son proved a lazy, unstable fellow, as most men prove who are born with thin purses and educated as if they were entitled to stout ones. He was not a credit to his mother, nor any ornament to society. He rarely went into any dashing dissipation, but was always behindhand in money matters, and terribly discontented with his lot, so that poor Mrs. Clybourne was continually finessing to keep him out of debt and to get him some employment which did not necessitate manual or mental labor, to both of which he had a fixed distaste. He had had several secretary- and *attaché*-ships, which he would have disgraced if anything had been required of him; and was now filling a starving Consulate in Italy, where his mother flattered herself he was safe at least for two or three years to come.

And as Mrs. Clybourne's ambition had been disappointed in the advancement of her son, so had it been thwarted in the marriage of her eldest girl. The eldest Miss Clybourne had proved neither a beauty nor a genius, and all her mother's clever management failed to make her anything but commonplace. She was always well dressed; there were desperate pinchings at home to let her appear properly abroad; but season after season in town passed by, summer after summer spent at desirable places of resort, and she was still unprovided for. It seemed incredible that such well laid plans should fail, such excellent tact go unrewarded, when so many weaker people succeeded every day; but, indeed, Susie Clybourne was a heavy boat to steer, a Dutch lugger of the fourteenth century, and her pilot was unable to bring her into port by any of the rules of modern navigation.

At last, just trembling on the verge of twenty-seven, a happy chance averted the disgrace impending—a happy chance, aided by her mother's faithful and ingenious endeavors.

A dull old widower came home from South America with a respectable little fortune, and was soon made to see he needed a new wife. Susie Clybourne was put in his way, and he married her. But he was rather a poor bargain, even for her; he was almost a fool, and had no talent for taking care of himself or his money, much less of his wife and children; he lost half his property before he had been married a year, and would probably have lost the other half before they had been married two, if his mother-in-law had not interposed and looked into his affairs herself. So that the poor lady had now not only her son but her son-in-law and his stupid wife and increasing babies on her mind; and no one could deny she carried weight in life.

It was no wonder, then, that upon Madeline, the youngest of the three, her hopes should have been centred. She felt she had a trump now in her hand, which was to repay her for her long-continued run of ill-success. Madeline was a beauty, and clever enough to have shone if she had not been a beauty; and the prudent mother gave her nights and days to the study of plans for her campaign.

Her campaign was just opening; everything looked favorable. To be sure, she was rather younger than Mrs. Clybourne's good sense would have recommended, but then there were reasons to set over against that. Susie's waning had taught her the shortness and high price of youth; and as for Madeline's character, it was more formed now than Susie's had been at twenty-five. Passion, imprudence; well, she meant never to have her out of her own sight; if she were watchful, there would be no trouble from those dangerous things—the feelings. Seventeen was early to confront the world, but Madeline was clever beyond her years, and would not fail to fight the battle well.

She had known, ever since she came to be capable of thinking for herself, what she was intended to accomplish:

what was expected of her by her mother and by all who were interested in her. She was to do with her good looks what her brother had failed to do with his indifferent brains, and what her sister had not had the force to do—and that was, to better, in some decided way, the fortunes of the family. She was to marry, that was understood; tacitly, of course; for refinement and good taste ruled at home, and such plans are not to be talked about. She looked to no other future, prepared herself for no other contingency. She had no idea of being mercenary, of marrying other than “as her heart inclined;” she was full of enthusiasm and of innocence; she dreamed the happiest dreams, wherein walked the master of her heart, crowning her days with the prosperity and plenty that her childhood had felt the absence of. Young heiresses dream of cottages, young cottagers of palaces. Madeline had felt the pinching of poverty at times too sharply to be enamored of its romantic features. She basked in golden dreams, no less pure and innocent than other children’s are, for being golden. That lord of her fancy whom any day might bring, was to give her everything she had not—everything that made life warm and beautiful; he was to satisfy her soul, to gratify her ambition, to give her the thousand pleasures she had so long sighed to have.

She had been pretty well educated—as well as her mother could afford; and had been brought up in many ways sensibly and thriftily. Mrs. Clybourne’s cottage was a model of taste and refinement, and the family ways were regular and well arranged. Madeline had always had her household duties, and had performed them wonderfully well till the opening of the campaign. Then her mother had relaxed in her requirements and had absolved her from many of her duties, though offering no reason for the change. But Madeline knew what it meant; she was ready for the market now, and she must be kept in the finest possible condition.

These were ugly words, and she did not say them even to herself. She respected her mother, and had been brought up to believe that everything she did was right; she never dreamed of doubting that this was right, and exactly "as everybody" did. For at seventeen it is hard to realize that "everybody" can be in the wrong.

Mrs. Sherman's return to her country place was a very happy event to Mrs. Clybourne. She foresaw great advantages to Madeline if her favor could be secured; and though she wished very well to the little girl at the Parsonage, she was disturbed by the good impression she had seemed to make on the evening of her *début* at the Hill, and she wished, a little selfishly, that she could have been kept in the background for a year or two at least.

Of Dr. Catherwood she was somewhat distrustful, too; she admired him a good deal, as everybody else did, but dreaded having Madeline see too much of him. Young girls, she knew, were very apt to fancy men of just his age and manner; and in a country town like that, where people were so much thrown upon each other for amusement, she foresaw great danger to her daughter's peace of mind if he should be at all attracted by her, as he evidently was not a marrying man, or at least the kind of a marrying man that it would do for Madeline to think about at all.

Then this Colonel Steele whom Mrs. Sherman had at present at the Hill, it would be necessary to warn Madeline against him, for he was in pursuit of a fortune for himself, and could not think of marrying her, however much he might admire her. The other one, the holder of Christine's bouquet, was nothing but a miserable literary creature; Madeline had too much good sense to listen at all to him; but she was only seventeen, and the man had such a manner of devotion with every woman whom he met.

Mrs. Clybourne's troubles had begun, she thought with a

sigh, as she stole in to look at her pretty daughter as she slept. She wished sincerely she were in pantalettes and short frocks still, and that all this wear and tear of mind had not come upon her. It was a heavy cross; really her path in life, she thought, had been marked out by a very rigid hand.

But she was still resolved to sacrifice herself to her duty, come what might; she had as magnificent a feeling of its sacredness as if her labor had been to provide for eternity instead of this short and uncertain state.

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTINE'S BENEFACTRESS.

"She bears a purse ; she is a region in Gulana, all gold and bounty."

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

DR. CATHERWOOD went into the parlor when he came down from Julian's room ; he took a place beside Madeline and made himself very fascinating to her. Mrs. Sherman began immediately to flagellate him ; now, *had* Dr. Upham sent him to bring away Christine at twelve last night ?

No, Dr. Upham said in a bewildered way, he did not remember having done it ; no, he thought not.

There ! and there was a great clamor, and Dr. Catherwood found himself *au bout de sa patience* ; and then Mrs. Sherman wanted to know, *apropos*, why Colonel Steele had been so negligent as not to tell her that he knew Dr. Catherwood. They were old friends, she heard through Leslie, and yet, though he had been three days at the Hill, and had heard her speak of Dr. Catherwood twenty times, he had not said he knew him. She did not think he deserved to have him asked to dinner, but nevertheless she would do it. How was it, would he come to-day ?

Dr. Catherwood was not many minutes in showing her it was impossible for him to do himself that pleasure, having an appointment some ten miles distant for the very hour she dined.

Christine felt a conviction that he would have had an appointment at a great distance for any hour she could have named.

Well, then, *tant pis pour lui* ; he would miss the society of the two prettiest girls in ——, for she was going to take Madeline and Christine home with her, *bongré malgré*, and Messrs. Steele and Leslie might congratulate themselves that they would have no rival.

Christine looked frightened and pleaded Julian, but her father said, "Why not, my dear?" and left her no resource but Dr Catherwood, who was not in the mood to help her. She looked at him, and he looked away and talked to Madeline. Her father reiterated his advice, Mrs. Sherman was vehement, the gentlemen were urgent, and poor Christine went miserably up-stairs to dress herself.

When she left the room, Mrs. Sherman said to the Rector in a tone of much apparent feeling: "Lovely young creature! Doctor, do you not feel weighed down with the responsibility of providing for her suitably?"

Dr. Upham raised his eyes in thoughtful surprise, and said: "How, Madam?"

He had never doubted he was providing for her suitably, and this was something of a shock to him.

"Why," said Mrs. Sherman, hesitatingly, "I mean as regards her future. Just at her age, you know, one must look forward, one must be cautious. Young girls make such rash choices; it is so necessary that they should be guided. Marriage, you see, is such a lasting good or evil to them."

The bewilderment went from Dr. Upham's face, and a deep sadness settled on it; his eyes sought the ground, and for some moments he did not speak.

"Christine is a mere child," he said, at length. "I have never thought of the possibility of her marrying for years to come. I do not think I need be disturbed about it yet; she seems almost a baby to me now."

"Ah! seventeen is not a baby, my dear sir. Seventeen is a woman; seventeen falls in love and marries. Why, poor Helona

was not so old, you know—not so old by a year, when she threw herself away so sadly.”

There was a moment's pause; if the speaker had been of ordinary make, she could not have resumed in the face of the father's pained expression. Madeline and Dr. Catherwood had ceased talking and were listening half involuntarily, as she went on in an earnest tone, bent simply on carrying through some favorite plan :

“ We cannot blame poor Helena for her choice, nor you, my dear sir, for not preventing such a sacrifice ; you could not, no father can, no man indeed. It needs a mother's care, a woman's tact, to guide and influence, not openly control, a young girl's fancies ; and pardon me, I long to see our dear Christine safe out of the reach of such ruin as her elder sister's. I love the child already. She is a gem ; she must shine, my dear sir ; you cannot hide her. Do not try to, only be cautious and act advisedly. She must see the world ; let her see it with a friend beside her experienced and faithful ; let her have a woman's care in those temptations and trials of the heart that none but women know. Think what it would have been to your poor lost Helena to have had such guidance and such companionship.”

The clergyman pressed his hand hastily before his eyes as if it gave him too much pain to listen, and yet as if he dared not bid her to desist. She began to apprehend that she had gone as far as it was decorous to go, and she hastily concluded :

“ You know, my dear sir, I am too blunt and honest to go smoothly in the world. I am not a diplomat ; I speak from my heart. I am all impulse. As far as you will trust your little daughter to me, I am her friend, I am your friend, I will make every effort to shield and protect her as I would shield and protect my own daughter, if I had one. My house is her second home if she will accept it ; all the pleasures and advantages I can command are at her service. Do not say yes or

no to me : only remember my offer and the earnestness with which I make it ; and whenever you can in any point accept it, reflect that you are doing me the greatest kindness you could have it in your power to do."

The woman of impulse got up, for Christine, with her bonnet on, was coming down the stairs. She gave both her hands to the Rector and looked at him through eyes that swam with tears. She had talked herself into the belief that she loved Christine, and was going to save her ; she was quite melted with her own eloquence ; besides, she always cried extremely easy, particularly after she had been up late, and was more than ordinarily nervous from any cause whatever.

Dr. Upham did not attempt to answer her, but he took her hand in evident agitation, and looked away from Christine, who entered as if the new thoughts connected with her were quite unbearable.

And when she had been swept away by the gay party, and Dr. Catherwood, throwing himself upon his horse, had galloped off in an opposite direction, the Rector sank back in his study-chair, and lived over again in bitter thought the remorse and anguish of his first deceived hope.

Christine, then, had come to years of womanhood ; his pale blossom was flushing into bloom ; his little nun was attracting the glances of the world ; his motherless child had come to the same point of danger that had proved fatal to her sister. He almost wished she were lying with the others in the quiet churchyard, " under the long grass of years," her soul safe with her mother's in the paradise of God—her place vacant at his side, but her companionship insured to him through the long eternity of heaven. The bitter thought of what might be in store for her in life, took away his faith and strength ; the remembrance of that dark death-bed palsied his powers of hope.

He had lost one child, *lost* her—he faced it then in all its blackness ; how should he live to see the mortal peril of

another? How could he shield her? Where hide her from the danger that advanced upon her? They said rightly he was no fit guardian for her; having let one perish, how should he presume still to keep the other in his charge? It was true he was unfit; but to whom give her up? To this new friend of whom he knew so little? Could she be better to her than her father? She was a woman, he was a man, sad and old as well, he was so far removed from her in every way, he hardly understood her, he could not hope to guide her heart.

But why need she marry? Why was it inevitable she should leave ever her quiet home, her safe humility? Ah! why had they found her out?

He would speak to her, would warn her.

What! take all her childish innocence away? Turn her simple youth to careful womanhood? No, no, my little girl; the years full soon

“will bring the inevitable yoke.”

“Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!”

Let her be simple still; let the dark day be unanticipated--the evil, evil hour of danger unprovoked. She might have this friendship, but he could not give her up to it; he would watch her as well as he knew how, and keep her from the world as long as possible.

Then, when she went into it, he would sanctify the air about her with his prayers.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MILLER'S FAMILY.

"Qui est bien, qu'il s'y tienne."

HARRY GILMORE was the *bête noire* among the boys of —; he was the wickedest and wildest of them all, and he had been little Julian Upham's chosen comrade for the past two years. It was a great scandal to the critical people that the minister should let his grandson keep such company; but, indeed, the minister did not have much to say about it. It was a law of ancient date that Julian should never, under any circumstances, have anything to do with that young outlaw; but it had long since gone into oblivion, and was an idle record on the statute-book. Julian was an exceptional child, and could not be bound by laws. "Nae will he minded but his ane," and that led him straight into the society of the miller's boy, and into the wildest kind of brawls with him also. They quarrelled like catamounts; they gave each other "bloody noses and cracked crowns," and yet they seemed unable to live out of each other's sight.

They were both bad boys, but public opinion was divided as to which was worst. Harry, with all his wildness, had not much talent for deceit, and so came oftenest to grief; while Julian was much fonder of telling lies than of doing anything else, and generally came out of scrapes much cleaner than his comrade. One was wicked with the wickedness of a child, the other was vicious with the vice of a matured mind.

They were very near the same age; but Harry, brown and

ruddy, was a head and shoulders taller than his companion, and looked a well grown lad, while the other seemed still only a curled darling of the nursery. It was in vain Crescens and the household servants counselled him to fight with gentlemen's sons, if he must fight with anybody; and it was in vain every obstacle was placed in the way of his intercourse with Harry; Harry haunted the Parsonage garden day and night, and Julian was as much at home in the miller's house as Harry was himself.

The miller's house was a very good one to have the *entrée* of; it must be confessed; there were always the very best imaginable cookies in the pantry, and pickles that beggared all description, besides cider in the cellar and an unlimited store of nuts.

The miller was a mild, easy man, from whom Harry got his blue eyes and his forgiving disposition; and his wife was a stirring, energetic, high-tempered woman, from whom the boy inherited the spirit that was always plunging him into trouble and making him restless under authority and rebellious under chastisement. He was the only inheritor of these incongruous qualities; the hope and ambition of his slow-thinking father and of his vigorous-minded mother, notwithstanding the trouble he had given them. His father stroked his chin mildly and prophesied he'd come all right by and by; but his mother fretted terribly under the disgrace of his continual misdoings, though she always took his part when he was punished, and encouraged in him the fatal idea that he was not justly dealt with. She felt a continual distrust of her superiors, and brought Harry up to feel that rich people were his natural enemies, and that he had the same right they had to be of consequence.

The fact was, the misfortune of the miller's wife was, that she was the miller's wife. She was a tall, handsome, black-eyed woman, with a will and temper that needed a stronger hand

than Richard Gilmore's to keep down, and she went through life bearing the burden of her great mistake, fretting at her lot, trying to make up for his short-comings, and corroding the peace of their home by the suggestions of her ambition. Ambition is a very high-bred vice to get into a miller's family, but it is well known to be a very insidious one, and not at all particular as to the company it keeps. Phœbe Gilmore loved her husband, but she was stronger and more developed than he was in every point, and went beyond him, and was unsatisfied, and wore herself out in fretting at his deficiencies. If she had been born in a different station, she might have been a great woman, for she had great qualities; if she had married another man in the same station in which she was, she might have been a happy woman, for she had strong affections.

Her restless energy had some good effects, however; it stimulated her husband to exertions he would never have made without it; she gave him no peace till he had paid off his old debts and begun to lay up something for his boy. The mill and house belonged to the Sherman estate, and the agent being well disposed towards Richard, it had been let to him on easy terms, so that he was, all things considered, doing well for himself, and his wife ought to have been satisfied.

Mrs. Gilmore looked with a doubtful eye upon Harry's intimacy with Julian; sometimes she fancied it would be a good thing for him, and help him to rise a little when they were both grown up; but more times she condemned it in her stubborn pride as a misfortune to the boy in every way, an intercourse only destined to last while they were children, and to be repudiated when Julian was old enough to discriminate high friends from low ones. She had played when she was a school-girl with Julian's mother, and had been treated with contempt by the fine young lady when she was grown up. Therefore she knew what was in store for Harry, unless she managed to get him a good education and start him in the world respectably and early.

She was always suspecting a prejudice against Harry at the Parsonage, and could not believe that the objections entertained there against their intercourse had foundation in anything but the difference of their station.

It was in vain that Dr. Upham repeatedly explained to her that the boys had a bad influence upon each other; that Julian was as much, if not more at fault than Harry; and that if they were differently disposed regarding mischief, there was no one child whom he would have welcomed as a playmate for his grandson more cordially than hers. But she could not be convinced, or rather could not stay convinced, two hours after she was out of the good Doctor's presence. She treated Julian with severity when he came to the mill, and forbade Harry to go near the Parsonage; but she might have saved herself the trouble, for all she said and did went for nothing with the boys. They robbed birds' nests in company, they filched apples, they scrawled on walls, they unhinged gates, they plundered melon patches, they murdered cats, always antagonistic and only held together by a common propensity for doing wrong. The Rector was grieved by his grandson's lawless ways, but he looked upon them with something of the miller's mild philosophy; while Christine, though in a very different way, took them almost as much to heart as Harry's mother did. She was terribly disturbed at the first symptoms of his perverse inclinations, and as they developed themselves more strongly, she was frightened and sore at heart. Her sensitive conscience was in an agony for his sins continually; she felt she did not understand him, that she had no influence upon him, that she was not doing her duty to him, while her father's composure made her feel she must exaggerate the danger, and that she was in fault in some way not to be as hopeful as he was.

From Dr. Catherwood, when at last she had brought herself to speak to him of faults that, with the true mother instinct, she had tried to hide from all the world, she had received a great

deal of comfort. He had told her not to try to understand boy-nature, not to be horrified at the enormities it displayed; to take it as a certain truth that boys are judged by a different measure from their softer-hearted sisters, and do not come to years of responsibility half as soon. He assured her he had spent years of his life robbing birds' nests, unhinging gates, plundering melon patches, and had had no warnings from his conscience of its sinfulness; boys' consciences were so curiously constructed, no woman could ever possibly hope to understand their workings. Christine had been very much relieved by this confession of his early wickedness, but had asked doubtfully if he had told falsehoods, too, without any provocation or occasion, and been vicious and disrespectful and unloving? He had answered rather evasively, but had managed to satisfy her, and she had felt, after that, as if half the burden were removed.

He did not manage to satisfy himself, however; he saw in the boy Julian indications of a spirit he understood, from personal experience, almost as little as his young aunt did. There was a warp somewhere in him, a distortion that time was not correcting, an elfin nature growing up stealthily beside the boy-nature and whispering evil to it night and day, twisting and dwarfing and marring it. The poison of his early childhood had entered every vein; half he had inherited in his mother's blood, half she had engrafted upon his impressionable infancy. In body as in mind he was strange and complicated; needing the tenderest care, the firmest control, the coolest judgment; he absorbed insensibly the time and thought of all around him; ungrateful and unloving, he yet bound all to him with the strongest ties. His delicacy, his helplessness during his frequent illnesses, his great beauty, his inexplicable vagaries, his very elfishness, made him fascinating to every one who was brought in contact with him. The townspeople called him "little Prince," the schoolboys jeered him for his fine clothes and yellow curls, the old gossips shook their heads

and said hard things about his future; but one and all looked after him with involuntary admiration, and with few exceptions bent before his will when it came in contact with their own.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RECTOR'S RESIGNATION.

"Stronger by weakness, wiser, men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home ;
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new."

WALLER.

"CATHERWOOD," said the Rector, dropping absently a second lump of sugar in his cup of *café noir* and drawing it towards him as he leaned back in his chair, "I have concluded it is right; you will not doubt me when I say I had a hard fight to come to it."

"To come to what, my dear sir?" asked Dr. Catherwood, looking up with a little wonder.

They were all alone, and Dr. Catherwood could not quite decide from his companion's tone whether some after-dinner confidence was coming, or merely the statement of some newly defined principle in ecclesiastical polity. Christine was away, taking dinner at the Hill; it was only a fortnight since the first one, and this was the fourth or fifth; by which it will be seen that Mrs. Sherman had had good success in her negotiations with the Rector. Julian had slid out of the room with his pockets full of desirable plunder from the table soon after the dessert came in; the maid-servant having brought in the coffee, had at last retired, and the two gentlemen were left alone in the pleasant dining-room. The windows opened upon the garden, now in all the beauty of the midsummer; the furniture of the room was old-fashioned and clumsy; so was the service

of the table, but rich and elegant in an old-fashioned way. There was but one decanter of wine before them, but its odor and its color showed it had "grown fat on Lusitanian summers." There was fruit in a heavy silver dish, and the coffee was served in dainty little cups of India china. And the waitress had put a stand of cigars on the table, and there was everything propitious for an undisturbed luxurious hour of quiet.

"A hard fight to come to what, my dear sir?" said the guest, with interest and perhaps a little shade of apprehension.

"To come to the decision that it is my duty to give up and let them send for Saul. Nay more, to go and fetch him to them, and pour the oil upon his head with my own hands. I begin to distrust myself sadly, Catherwood; perhaps I have held out too long; but up to the present time I have felt I really was not selfish. Now I see we must not be Providence for people; we have no right to say they shall be saved our way; who knows, there may be something new will touch them; there is a great deal I have left unsaid; perhaps some younger man can say it better. At all events, he shall have the chance; I am not any longer to be in the way of those who ask a newer and more stirring method; I have sent for my vestry; in half an hour I must go and meet them, and leave you to your cigar alone."

"But, my dear sir," said his companion earnestly, "are you sure this is well digested? Are you not doing this because it is a sacrifice, and because you feel you would rather err on the safe side to yourself? Make yourself quite sure of that, I beg of you, before you publish this resolution. One is so apt, my good sir, to be in a hurry to clear one's self of a temptation even at the risk of giving a wrong judgment for the benefit of others. Consider you are dealing with minds that are as children's in comparison with your own; do not let their importunity or their vacillation influence you unduly. This is a most

important step. Have you been able to look at it, putting yourself entirely out of mind?"

"It is my belief I have done so; I believe that I am doing right. The strongest of us can ask no more than light enough to do that faithfully. You know it is not a new thought with me. I have been looking at it from a thousand points of view.

have been studying it every day since I first began to see I did not satisfy the younger and more unstable of my flock, and now I can no longer feel doubt enough to permit me to remain their pastor. There is a great deal of talent and earnestness in the Church, Catherwood, and there is no reason that we should not get a man who can do them all good; they need a stimulant, perhaps. I myself may be better for a change."

"But, my dear sir," said his companion, in an anxious tone, "you are too old for such a change as this—you will not undertake another charge—you cannot bear this transplanting at your age. You cannot mean to leave this house—the comforts you have gathered round you—your daughter's home—the home of all who have gone before you. It is not right; believe me, it is not."

A shade of agitation crossed the Rector's face, but presently gave way again to the calm of his habitual look.

"It will depend upon my successor, somewhat, whether I am compelled to leave my home. I shall not undertake another charge; I feel myself unequal to it, and I would fain stay in this house, if any arrangement can be made to do it. No doubt I have a right to; it is virtually Christine's, but it ought to be the Parsonage if a man of family comes to keep it up. I shall tell them so. I mean to give it up to the Church. There is no other suitable residence in the place. It is useless to talk about it. Christine is a brave little girl; she will not make it any harder for me. No doubt it is well to crucify this cowardice—this tenderness for the past—this living on the memories of what God has taken. I doubt if it is healthy; perhaps it has

been bad for Christine. I am afraid she is not like other children of her age; she needs life; she has had only shadows heretofore. Perhaps it will be better for her to be taken away from here; perhaps it will be as well for me. The Lord that has been wise in the past will be merciful in the future."

There was a long silence. Dr. Catherwood sat looking fixedly before him, his glass of wine untasted at his side. The Rector remained motionless for a long while; at last raised his coffee to his lips and drank it off; then rising, said, "Shall I find you here when I come back?" while he glanced towards the clock.

He was not very attentive to his guest's answer; it was half-past three, the hour for the vestry meeting, and, taking up his hat, he went out of the room. Dr. Catherwood pressed his hand before his eyes for a moment with an impatient, gloomy look; then rising, walked over to the window, and watched his host slowly following the path that led across the garden to the churchyard gate. His step was heavy and unwilling, his face sad beyond expression. He looked down the sunny walks, and seemed to hear again the voices of his lost children playing there. He pushed aside the honeysuckle that drooped across the gateway—the honeysuckle that his young wife's hand had planted; and then his eye fell on the grass-grown mounds within, sleeping in the shadow of the church—dear beyond belief to him, sacred as no other earth could be.

Ah! the children of strangers would soon be playing among the garden walks; the eyes of those who had no tender memories to soften them, would daily fall upon those grassy graves; the feet that had trod that churchyard path for forty faithful years, must turn into new and unaccustomed ways. But, patience! This land of shadows will soon be past; the abiding City, the better country, is not far off; an earthly home—that is, an inn; a heavenly one—that is, Love's blessed rest and sanctuary.

CHAPTER XIII.

DR. UPHAM'S SUCCESSOR.

"Le roi est mort—vive le roi !"

It was the third Sunday after Trinity, a beautiful July day, and the new minister was to make his *début*; consequently the church was very full. Mrs. Sherman was in a flutter of enthusiasm, for the new minister was a *protégé* of hers, and she arrived earlier than she had ever been known to arrive at church before.

The Clybourne pew was full, Susie and her husband and two of the little girls having driven over from their country home at B—— to hear the young minister's first sermon. This was a proof of the importance of the occasion, for it was a long drive in warm weather, and Susie had not often force enough to get herself ready in time. Her husband had very much the features and expression of an old sheep; Madeline despised him too much to sit in the pew with him, and was impolite enough to go over to Mrs. Sherman's the moment he came in, shaking herself clear of the two children, who grabbed her unceremoniously, and passing Susie with a little nod. She was at the age that cannot understand that stupid people have any right to live. Her mother watched her with a grave face; she rather admired her self-will and high spirit, it seemed so young, and from her point of view was almost picturesque; but still she dreaded its effects.

Madeline was not only very perverse about her brother-in-law, but she had a very well developed contempt for many of the

decencies of modern life; among others, for that of going to church on week days, teaching in parish schools, and visiting sick old women. She did not take kindly to the refined semi-religious fashionable young-lady life that was held up to her, and Mrs. Clybourne had ceased to insist upon her following it. She generally came to church on Sunday morning, and spent the afternoon in writing letters. She laughed at the old women and the Dorcas work-basket, and did not make it a point of conscience to conceal the fact that Dr. Upham's sermons made her very sleepy, and that she thought the service was intolerably long.

It must be confessed she had not very prepossessing forms of religious character about her. Susie had always been orthodox about the old women and the parish school, and her brother-in-law was a vestryman, warden, or something of that sort. Mrs. Sherman was a sentimental, emotional, high-church woman; and as for her mother—Maddy respected and loved her mother, but her practice did not inspire her with much enthusiasm for her religious faith.

She had always had, though, a vague, groping hope struggling upwards through the vanities and follies of her soul, that there was something beautiful and good in religion after all, and that she should some time reach to the knowledge of it. But something very different from the religion that she saw about her.

She wondered what the young clergyman would be like; she was prepared to ridicule him very much and to make him terribly afraid of her; she had given Mrs. Sherman warning that she meant to make his life a burden to him; nevertheless she thought with satisfaction that her toilette was very happy, and that the Sherman pew was more prominent than any in the church except the Rector's.

In the Rector's pew sat Dr. Upham himself; the painful nightmare of exile had passed, and he still found himself undie-

turbed in his old home. His resignation had surprised all the disaffected out of their plottings against him, and had roused all the loyal into enthusiasm, and they had unanimously refused to accept it. This had not shaken his resolution, however; he only yielded to their solicitation far enough to agree to keep the parsonage, and to consider himself as resting temporarily from the duties of his charge while his successor occupied the pulpit for a year or two on trial.

The Rector acceded with his benevolent mild smile to this view of the case; but he knew his day was over, and that his work was ended there. Indeed the animation with which they set about finding a suitable successor did not look very much as if he were meant to be only temporary. There was plotting and counter-plotting, and wire-pulling and intriguing, among the friends of the opposing candidates, for the charge of St. Philip's was considered a very comfortable and altogether a desirable charge in clerical circles, and ever since the news of Dr. Upham's resignation had been afloat, there had been many disengaged eyes turned affectionately towards it. Two weeks had been spent in wrangling over generalities, two weeks more in a close race between a first-class high-church elocutionist and a popular evangelical revolutionist. Both these, however, were thrown over by the sudden and unexpected withdrawal of the Sherman influence, which was fixed upon a new and undiscussed candidate—a "youth to fortune and to fame unknown," new-fledged from the seminary, just trying his wings on a short flight. Before any one knew exactly what was under discussion he was called, had accepted, and was expected to arrive among them. It was all done in a masterly way; the lancet was so sharp the defrauded majority had not felt any pain till everything was over, and they found they had been cheated out of any voice in the affair. Owing to this fermentation, the young divine was not destined to step into a very peaceful parish; but of the disturbed state of feeling among his parishioners he was

kept in happy ignorance till he became intimate enough with them to hear the story from each one with embellishments, and to be warned against every person with whom he had anything to do.

But this was the awakening ; on the morning of his first coming into the old church, with its well filled pews, its venerable altar, its open sunshiny windows, and its green embowering shade around, the Reverend Mr. Brockhulst felt as if the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places, and as if he had, indeed, a goodly heritage. He had about as clear an idea of the duties and trials of a parish priest, as a young bride has of the duties and trials of housekeeping before she enters on them. The young bride has a general idea of a bright fire, cheerful lamp, flowers upon the table, pink curtains in her dressing-room, and company to dinner every day ; the young clergyman had a vague picture in his mind of an ivied porch, a rustic flock, sweet babies to be christened, hoary-headed pilgrims to be laid in churchyard ground, Christmas feasts at which his presence would be the crowning joy, Lenten services in which pastor and people both would go down upon their knees in penitence and chant the Miserere in a minor key. He was but twenty-three years old, ordained only a month before, a student up to the very moment of his ordination ; of an enthusiastic poetic mind, and as ignorant of human nature as if he had been Robinson Crusoe's eldest son.

Everything was new to him but study, life, action, the face of nature ; everything wore the glory and the freshness of a dream. He had a good deal of talent, and in the seminary was looked upon as very promising ; he had been religious and pure-minded from his childhood, and had never had a thought of any other career than the one for which he had been brought up. He was impractical, which was not his fault, considering he had never had to do with anything but theories ; he had an ideal, which was natural, but he was wedded to it, which was unfortunate.

His voice was perfect, he read to the admiration of his listeners; his manner was earnest, naïve, and touching; his face was boyish, delicate, and beautiful. What he had to say was very well, rather young and a good deal decorated, but the voice and the manner and the face made it like the message of an angel, and the congregation went home enchanted. With some few exceptions; there were several tiresomely critical people who brushed aside the graceful drapery of manner, and looked at the bare thought, and said "Well?" in an interrogative and doubtful tone. There were other practical ones who said they had not heard any news, and some, again, who had grown so used to the old Rector's quiet, thoughtful, suggestive sermons, that they could not get in love at once with anything so different. Still, all felt the influence of the new minister's earnestness, all yielded more or less to the magnetism of his warm enthusiasm, and all went home with strong though diverse impressions of his character.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. PHILIP'S IN NEW HANDS.

"More belongs to riding than a pair of boots."

REFORMS began; Mrs. Sherman was inspired with new life by the tide of excitement rushing into the recent vacuum in the church; she found herself full of occupation, and consequently much happier than she ordinarily was. She felt that the whole church rested on her shoulders; she wondered how it had ever existed before she took it up. She always spoke of Dr. Upham as her poor dear old friend, and of the present incumbent as her beloved pastor.

She aimed to make herself popular with the people of the town, and visited those whom she had never visited before. She played the gracious lady right and left, and made herself conspicuous in all charitable matters. She reorganized the Sunday-school, remodelled the Dorcas enterprise, and made a complete *bouleversement* in the matter of the choir. She also instituted great changes in the hours of service; the old bell, which for forty years had rung its daily summons at the comfortable and common sensical hour of nine, now yawned out a call to prayers at six; the Sunday evening service was changed from four to five, to accommodate the Hill; while most of the humbler worshippers of St. Philip's had to stay at home to boil the kettle for the evening meal. She swept the besom of destruction through the chancel, and gave the vestry no rest day or night till they consented to allow her to remodel it—and she did everything with the air and manner of a pioneer and as if

nobody had ever done anything before her, and made the people who had been in the church for years feel exceedingly irate and uncomfortable.

Still, only one dared openly to oppose her; one who would have had the moral courage to have opposed a locomotive under a full head of steam if she had conceived it to be getting in her way at all. This lady, who had long been a leader in the affairs secular and spiritual of St. Philip's, named herself Van Riper. She was a widow, without any children, with very little money, and with as few inducements to continue a residence in the flesh as can be imagined. Nobody entertained the least affection for her, and she seemed quite free from any tenderesses of that sort herself. Still, she did a great deal of good in her own hard way, and was considered generally a very excellent person. She was as strong as a horse, and could stand from morning till night cutting out work for the Dorcas, or measuring school children for their clothes. Her mind was as tough as her body; she was secretary and treasurer of everything, and carried the most intricate accounts in her head without the least confusion. She was tall and sallow, had a heavy energetic tread, and always wore a black bonnet and a broché shawl. The young people in the parish, who did not like her at all, were in the habit of calling her "the Bishop." When the little sarcasm reached her ears (which were so keen nothing ever escaped them long), it seemed to gratify her, if one could presume to say anything ever gratified her. For years she had done a full half of all the lay work that was done in the parish. Dr. Upham had great confidence in her judgment and ability, and a certain sort of respect for her unflinching independence; and a good deal of the regret that he felt at the dissolution of his cabinet came from the thought that she must go out with him.

For that she must go out no one could for a moment doubt. Mrs. Sherman had early taken a violent dislike to her, and she

had early set her face sternly against Mrs. Sherman's interference. The two were incongruous, to say it in the softest way. When they came in contact there was an explosion, an explosion that shook the parish to its foundation, and all the peaceable-minded turned their attention to keeping them apart as much as might be. Mrs. Sherman, of course, triumphed; she had all the young people on her side, and all the people that were ambitious of being invited to the Hill, and she had the new minister's approval also, and the conservative voice was drowned.

It may seem a little weak on the part of the new minister that he let Mrs. Sherman rule him so completely; but there are a good many things to be considered. In the first place, he had no idea that she was ruling him; he thought he was having everything entirely as he wanted it himself. In the second place, he sympathized in a thousand ways with Mrs. Sherman, and he found himself terribly chilled and disconcerted by the old cabinet, with Mrs. Van Riper at their head. He was quite unused to the society of ladies, and so was perfectly intoxicated with his first draught of it at the Hill. Mrs. Sherman was a miracle of goodness, generosity, and enthusiasm. Christine, Madeline, the young girls that he met there—ah, there were no words for them; they all wore yet, indeed, the glory and the freshness of a dream. He felt as if he were in fairy land, and Mrs. Sherman his good genius. There never was a young deacon, surely, with such magical surroundings.

There was no wish that was not gratified, no fancy that was not carried out for him. Money, that comes so hard at the bidding of most young clergymen, flowed into his hands at the mere opening of his lips.

Mrs. Sherman always expected to pay high for the indulgence of her taste, and this ecclesiastical mania was certainly an expensive one; but she did not mind, and the Judge, her husband, was glad of anything that kept her quietly at home. It

was as easy for him to be paying for school-room decorations, strawberry festivals, fonts, altar cloths, and organs, as for *coupés*, saddle-horses, works of art, or boxes at the opera; and certainly it had this advantage, that it allowed him a little rest, and promised to give him at least six months in one place, a luxury to which he had long been unaccustomed.

Perhaps it was a weak thing for Mr. Brockhulst to be so much under the influence of such a woman; but how was he to know, pray, that she was such a woman? How is pure-minded, cloistered twenty-three to judge correctly of worldly-wise, strong-willed, scheming forty-five? It would have been better for the parish if he had understood and withstood; but the age of miracles is past, they say, and Mr. Brockhulst only did what every man, lay or clerical, of his years, would have done—namely, walked straight into the trap, and thought himself in paradise till he began to see he could not get out. Dr. Upham should have warned him, perhaps. But then Dr. Upham was a little blinded by Mrs. Sherman's blandishments himself, and only saw half her faults, and regretted, most of all, her want of judgment and discretion. Of these, he did try delicately to hint to his young successor; but he, alas! had heard so much of the dear old Rector's inefficiency and want of zeal, that his mind was not quite in a state to be benefited by his moderate counsels; and soon the Doctor began to think it was no longer his part to make suggestions; that no young man could be expected patiently to receive the counsels of one not legally placed over him; and so, by degrees, he withdrew himself more and more from parish affairs, and only used his influence to soothe and keep peace among those who had not benefited by the change in the administration; and as time went on, the necessity for this exertion did not decrease.

Mr. Brockhulst's salary was small; the Rector's having lived on his own property had given the parish a much better look than it would otherwise have had. So that it had been con-

cluded by the vestry that, for the first year or two, till the parish was built up a little, it would be expedient for any young man assuming the charge of it, to assume also a class of boys for a few hours in the day, to eke out the salary by the compensation he would receive. There was no good boys' school in —, and most of the vestrymen had boys, so that it is possible they were not altogether disinterested in the matter. Mr. Brockhulst willingly assumed the duty; he would have willingly assumed the care of six schools, and as many hospitals and almshouses, if it had been proposed to him, and would have died in consequence with pleasure. He did not value his life at all in comparison with his duty, and had no idea but to spend and be spent in the service of his Lord. He rose at day break, and went to bed long after midnight; he taught the class of boys from nine to one; he looked after the parish-school and the Sunday-school, and visited the poor and sick most faithfully; he had two services every day, and preached twice on Sunday, and yet he felt that he was by no means coming up to his ideal.

With these views, it was no wonder that the Doctor's moderate counsels fell coldly on his ear, and that as time passed on, he came less and less frequently to him for direction and advice. It was very natural, the Doctor said to himself, trying to reason away the pain he felt; it was very natural; at his age he would no doubt have done the same; newly wedded people should be left to themselves, and so should newly wedded flock and pastor. What was youth without self-confidence?—as unnatural as age without caution and timidity.

Mr. Brockhulst was a very good teacher, the paternal vestrymen soon found; the boys were pushed forward very rapidly, and were quite enraptured with their studies. All but Julian, who was for ever in difficulties, and about whom the young clergyman was very much perplexed. It was a delicate thing to send the Rector's grandson home every week with a bad report, and to have to keep him in four days out of five; but

still it was something that must be done, and the Rector had given him to understand he wished no difference made in any way.

Upon this he had acted strictly at first, but by-and-by it came to lean a little to the other side of justice, and he did make a difference in his treatment of Julian; but it was not a difference in favor of Julian or in deference to his grandfather's high station in the church. Julian was the worst child in the world, by great odds, but that was no reason why his occasional lucid intervals should be overclouded with injustice and something that had a little the look of persecution. He was unbearably exasperating about little things, but all his crimes were not capital, and it was not calculated to improve him to have them treated as if they were; it rather mixed things up in his mind. The good and pure-minded young parson was as much bewildered and horror-stricken as was Christine at the boy's depravity; but he did not feel himself at liberty, for example's sake, to treat it as tenderly as she did, and so he got into the way of treating it with greater severity than the occasion required, and making an example of him; and being made an example of, is about as unprofitable a course as any child can be subjected to.

But soon a partner came to share the honors of iniquity with Julian: Harry Gilmore was taken from the district school, where he was not doing anything but tearing his trowsers and scratching names on his desk, to become a member of Mr. Brockhulst's class of boys, and to be educated like a gentleman. The miller shook his head; he had been shaking it steadily ever since the class had been formed, and the idea had entered his wife's brain; he had been firmer about it than about any thing else he had ever attempted to oppose her in; but in the nature of things heads cannot shake for ever, and sieges must be raised some time. At the end of a month the miller gave in, but with a gloomy and unsatisfied demeanor.

"Phoebe, it's the first wrong step," he said; but he said no

more, and never reproached her with it afterwards. He made no demur about the money, although the mill had not done very well that year, and it would have been better to have retrenched than expanded at just that point.

Dr. Upham, when he had heard of the arrangement, put on his hat and walked down to the miller's house to see if it were too late to remonstrate against it. But it was; it would have been too late a month ago; and all Mrs. Gilmore's pride flamed up to resent the interference, if anything so delicate and pastoral could be called an interference.

And Harry became a member of Mr. Brockhulst's class of boys, and partner in especial of Julian Upham and the enemy of peace.

CHAPTER XV.

FIVE MINUTES TOO LONG AT THE GARDEN GATE.

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying :
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying."

HERRICK.

"WHAT shall you wear, do you think?" asked Madeline, sauntering through the Parsonage garden late in the afternoon with her now dear friend Christine.

"Oh, I have not thought," said Christine, stooping to pick some heliotrope that grew beside the path. "At the fair, you mean?"

"Why, yes, of course I mean that; what else should I mean, when I haven't been talking of anything else for the last hour? Though, in truth, I believe you haven't been hearing a word I've said."

"Oh, yes, I have," said Christine, faintly—though in truth she had been very absent, and her face had a slight shade on it.

"I never saw a girl who thought so little of such things," went on Madeline, with some warmth. "I sometimes conclude we haven't anything in common. What is it makes you different? Do you think it's wrong to care about your clothes?"

"Why no, I do care about them. I always notice what other people wear, and want to look as well myself; you know that, I'm sure," she said, making an effort to be interested. "Now tell me what dress *you* mean to have for the fair—you wear your bonnet, don't you?"

"*Pourquoi donc?* To rumple my hair for the evening? No,

indeed—Mrs. Sherman is going to let her maid dress my hair, and I shall wear my claret-colored organdie and the garnet set that Raymond sent last month. I tell you in confidence, I mean to make an end of little Brockhulst; I mean to put him out of his misery; he will die when he sees me in those garnets.”

“You ought to be ashamed,” said Christine, with a little laugh, tying the heliotrope together.

“Oh, ought I? Well, I’m not; seriously, Christine, don’t you think that garnets are becoming, to people of my tint, you know? Then I’ve an idea that I shall take Susie’s thread lace shawl (where’s the use of a married sister if you can’t use her things?), and that lovely parasol she had when she was married; she hasn’t had a chance to use it half-a-dozen times. It’s well to have the parasol at hand, though we shan’t need it in the tent; but I don’t mean to stay in the tent all the time, I can assure you. I mean to walk with Colonel Steele and all the others through the grounds, and make Brockhulst go quite insane with jealousy. Poor fellow! Christine, *ought* I to be ashamed?”

“I shall not tell you; you like to be scolded about him, and it only seems to make you worse.”

“Oh, you clever creature,” cried Maddy, with a coquettish laugh; “I absolutely am afraid of you, you see through people so. It’s a pity we are to have the same table at the fair; it will make me uneasy all the time to think you have your eyes upon me. But, honestly, don’t you think my dress will be enchanting? I have not settled on the color of my gloves; that’s the worst feature of claret for a dress, it is so hard to find a pretty shade of kid to go with it. Pearl would have been my choice, pearl worked with claret, but I doubt if I can find it; ah, Christine, if I could have my gloves from Paris always! That’s my dream, you know.”

“Well, it’s evident you won’t realize it if you marry Mr Brockhulst.”

"Marry Mr. Brockhulst! Oh, you are too innocent to live. Fancy me the parson's wife, presiding at the Dorcas in pearl-colored kid gloves and garnets. There! there's the six o'clock bell for prayers. Run in and get your bonnet, and we'll go through the garden way. I'll wait for you here at the gate."

And while Christine went in for her bonnet, Madeline waited for her at the gate that separated the churchyard from the Parsonage garden. The honeysuckle that was trained above it was now in full bloom, and the gate was low and rather of the order that we see in pictures; so that, as the young minister came slowly and thoughtfully through the churchyard towards the vestry-room door, he caught sight of something that "struck a bliss on all the day," that made him forget the schoolboys and the forfeit lessons and the unwritten sermon on his study-table. Madeline met his eye half timidly, half brightly. She was so beautiful, she would have turned any man's head; and, despite her saucy raillery, she had a little sentiment about the young divine which gave her a softness that she lacked with others.

He came towards her quickly and took her hand, the hand that had rested on the gate; the other was occupied with holding her fringed parasol between her and just one stray gleam of sunshine that was finding its way down through the honeysuckle.

"You are coming in to prayers?" he said, not knowing exactly what he said though, as he touched her ungloved hand.

"In a moment," she said, caring very little what he talked about, as long as he stayed there at the gate till Christine came.

In fact they were just where words are only useful to conceal thoughts, not to expound them.

"You were not at prayers this morning."

"Oh, no. It rained, you know, and mamma would not let me come. Mamma is such a tyrant."

The bell began to toll ; in a moment more he would have to go, and Madeline resolved he should not, till Christine came back ; she was very jealous of her power to please him ; besides, the minutes she passed with him were sweeter than ordinary minutes, there was not any doubt, so she profited by a happy accident and exclaimed :

"Oh ! Mr. Brockhulst ! look at my parasol—how shall I get it out ?" For she had been rather trifling with her parasol since Mr. Brockhulst came up, and the interests of the fringe had suffered. There was a sweetbrier growing in the hedge and mixing itself up with the honeysuckle by the latch, and in this the fringe had caught. Mr. Brockhulst leaned over it ; so did Madeline. Mr. Brockhulst's hands shook a little ; Madeline's finger got pricked with a brier and bled a drop of crimson blood, at sight of which Mr. Brockhulst forgot the parasol and the fringe, and wrapped the delicate hand in his own delicate cambric handkerchief, and bent down agitatedly over it, and then the bell stopped.

Madeline heard it, but he did not ; and with a wicked feeling of triumph she went on talking foolishly and prettily about her finger, and admitting that it hurt her, when it did not in the least, and telling him not to mind, it would be better in a minute.

"There, there, my parasol—oh, look after that !" she said, a little frightened, as Christine came running down the path, and as she caught sight of Mrs. Van Riper standing immovable on the church steps and watching them.

"Why," said Christine, "why do you wait for me, Maddy ? Julian kept me. It is five minutes past the hour ; the bell has stopped—so long—oh, Mr. Brockhulst ! I did not see you."

Mr. Brockhulst at her words had started up—the color left his face ; he looked like a person who had received some sudden intelligence of evil. With a hurried bow he left them and went directly to the vestry-room door.

Madeline, though she did not understand the full extent of the self-reproach he felt, understood enough to feel uncomfortable, and to wish she had not kept him. But after all, what was it? Five minutes, that was all, and not a dozen people waiting for him in the church. No one would have ever known if that horrid woman had not seen them at the gate.

Yes, it was only five minutes; but the young minister felt, as he walked into the chancel with a hurried step, that months of penance could not make up for it; in his eyes it seemed the blackest sin he ever had been guilty of; a neglect of duty, a carelessness in God's service, a desecration of holy hours, an indulgence in unholy thoughts perfectly monstrous and appalling. His face was bloodless; his voice shook as he turned to address his people. That little vanity of Madeline's cost him bitter misery of spirit.

"Oh, Christine!" she whispered, clutching Christine's arm as they hurried into church, "what do you think the Bishop will do about it? How long do you suppose she had been glaring at us from the steps? I vow I am terrified to death. I shouldn't wonder if she got them to depose him."

The Bishop read her responses in a terribly severe tone that evening, and her eyes had a very stony, unprepossessing look, as she fixed them on the minister during the reading of the lessons. He faltered as he met them more than once, and all the congregation could not fail to see that for some cause he was in a state of agitation. Madeline really was uncomfortable; she lingered at the church door with Christine for some minutes after service, hoping for a word with him in passing out—a word that would make him feel the insignificance of the Bishop's wrath compared with the potency of her smiles; but she was disappointed.

He passed them quickly with the stiffest bow; and for ten days she was denied the chance of exchanging a look, much less

a word with him. He never came near their cottage, and at the Hill avoided her with a most practical perseverance. At church his eye never fell by any chance upon her, and in the street he did not see her. Madeline came to the Parsonage every day and talked with Christine about it, laughing at him, bemoaning the withdrawal of his favor, and wondering what it meant.

In truth she was rather restless and petulant at home just then, and might as well be talking nonsense with Christine about her lovers as trying to do anything sensible for her mother, for she did not, or could not, persevere in any work above an hour, and invariably spoiled everything she undertook.

"In truth, Madeline," said her mother sternly, "I do not think this getting up for prayers at six o'clock agrees with you."

"It isn't that," said Madeline, "at all; it's this horrid August weather; it makes me good for nothing."

It was the middle of August, and the weather certainly was very warm.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FAIR.

"Her only labour is to kill the time;
And labour dire it is, and weary wo."

THOMPSON.

THE fair had for its remote object, the purchase of an organ; for its immediate intention, the gratification of Mrs. Sherman's energy, and the amusement of the young ladies of the congregation. It was not to be a commonplace, unambitious affair, held in a public hall or vacant house or Sunday-school, presided over by spinsters and superintendents; but was to be more on the order of a *fête champêtre*, a full-dress entertainment, only enduring the length of one summer afternoon, and to be terminated by a little party for the young ladies interested, at the Hill in the evening.

The tent was erected in a beautiful though distant part of the Sherman grounds; the Sherman servants were in attendance; the Sherman carriage had been driving about the town all day for the convenience of everybody concerned in it; the Sherman *cuisine* furnished the greater part of the refreshments, and Sherman money paid for most of the articles made and sold; it was pretty clear, upon reflection, that the Sherman pocket would have suffered less if the organ to be purchased had been a Sherman present out and out—only Mrs. Sherman would have missed the occupation.

It is a pretty well established fact that the young men of this generation are averse to fairs, that they turn their backs upon them to a man, that they will resort to dishonorable stratagema

to avoid attending them. But it so happened that Mrs. Sherman had a number of young men at call who did not dare to refuse her invitation, who were indebted to her for so much hospitality that they could not with any decency be engaged in any other way when the day for her fair came round. So it happened that the three o'clock train brought up half-a-dozen "men in uniform," and three or four black coats; and that at four o'clock, when dined, refreshed, and dressed, they walked down from the house to the picturesque and decorated tent, there was tumultuous fluttering in the hearts of the young ladies in it.

There were a good many pretty faces in — ; the tent just then, indeed, was a perfect rosebud garden of girls, but of them all the minister's little daughter was again the prettiest. Madeline, indeed, had realized her dream in the matter of her toilette; she was faultlessly dressed, and strikingly beautiful in face and figure. But Christine's was something more picturesque than good style, something more touching than mere beauty. She wore a dress and mantilla of white barege, a very fresh and light and pure material, and a round hat of the whitest straw, bound with light-green velvet, and with a long green feather drooping over her waving auburn hair, smoothed and braided low on her neck behind. She wore the malachite ornaments, heavy earrings, and bracelets that one might fancy of the sort Isaac sent to Rebecca by the hands of his faithful steward. Her mantilla was fastened low on her shoulders by pins to match, and her shoulders were exquisite through the transparent texture of her dress. The faint pink was deepening gradually on her cheeks, but it never grew too deep for the delicate character of her beauty.

Mrs. Sherman had done well to place these young girls together; a sight of the two side by side was quite worth the admittance-fee and all the subsequent extortions. The table of which they had charge was the most prominent and best

situated in the tent. Christine had flowers and bon-bons to dispose of, and Madeline told fortunes and kept a sort of post-office. Flowers and bon-bons consequently were in high demand, and the post-office was besieged by gentlemen. Madeline's eyes were gleaming with triumph; she had taken in more money than any one else in the tent, and the other young ladies were throwing envious glances at her from behind their unbesieged tables.

At about five o'clock Dr. Catherwood came in; Christine saw him enter, and watched him as well as she could from the demands upon her attention, as he made his way up towards them. Very slowly, however. He went to every other stall first, and then Mrs. Sherman seized upon him, and for half an hour at least she walked about leaning on his arm and making him buy everything that seemed to hang fire at all. She could not have found an easier victim, nor one who submitted with a better grace. She released him at last, however, and then he made his way up to the table where the flowers and bon-bons were dispensed.

At the moment that he reached it, Colonel Steele, at Christine's right hand, was helping her to make change for a young officer who had been buying bon-bons and bouquets the whole afternoon; and a little below them, before the table, Mr. Leslie was trying to make up his mind between two boxes of confectionery and particularly anxious for Miss Upham's judgment and advice.

"Oh, how late you are! I thought you were not coming," she said, as Dr. Catherwood came up beside her. Her face had a radiance of welcome on it, too, and Colonel Steele looked on perplexed. She seemed so innocently relieved and happy at the sight of him, one would have said she was welcoming a brother or a father. Yet Dr. Catherwood was not exactly the sort of man for a pretty girl to welcome as a father or a brother. The doctor looked handsome that day, remarkably handsome, even among the younger and more dashing men about him; and he

had that even, thoughtful manner, that Colonel Steele was well aware all women most admire. Christine evidently was much better pleased to have him by her, quiet as he was, than any of the others, devoted as they had been, and yet her manner was anything but that of a coquette, though her words and tone had been those of one.

Madeline would have said exactly what she did: "Oh, how late you are; I thought you were not coming!"—but she would have said it with a flash of her eyes, and in a tone so low no one else could possibly have heard. Christine said it in a low tone, too, because her voice was naturally low, but so that Colonel Steele heard it distinctly, and with a simplicity of expression that all the world could have seen if they had wanted to.

"There is a bouquet I have been saving for you all the afternoon," she said, giving him one. "Everybody has been wanting it, though it is so little."

"Oh, Miss Upham! when I made you such an unheard-of offer for it! That is what I call simony; you have defrauded the Church, let me tell you; Catherwood will not give you half as much," said Colonel Steele.

"Oh, you will, Dr. Catherwood, won't you? Just as much as ever I ask you?"

"Just as much as ever you ask me, Miss Christine," he said, taking out his purse with a smile.

"Well, I don't want you to pay me now," she said laughing. "You must help me count up all my gains to-night, and if I come out very much below Madeline, you shall pay a whole fortune for the flowers. Madeline will outdo me, though, I am very much afraid."

"Miss Clybourne is more enterprising."

"Yes, I know she is. There, Dr. Catherwood, see, she is beckoning to you. That's just the way she does. She has a letter for you, I suppose. Do not stay though; it isn't fair in her."

"No, I assure you I will not stay," he said, moving away slowly towards the other end of the table.

Colonel Steele looked after him with some curiosity. Here was a man in demand among young ladies, evidently, and yet what had he done to make them like him? He did not pay them compliments; he did not have the appearance of any special devotion to them; he only looked handsome and thoughtful, and as if he understood them through and through.

"It takes very little to please the pretty creatures," thought the Colonel, with a shrug; yet he thought gloomily, that little was a natural gift, and all men could not gain it, however strongly they might ambition it. He called Dr. Catherwood his old friend, and yet in truth they knew each other very slightly. They had travelled together at different times, had done each other various favors in various little ways, but had never got beyond an easy cordial acquaintance. Perhaps the reserve was more on Dr. Catherwood's part than on his, but he had never had any object in penetrating it, and had been content to remain just where he was till now.

The fact was, Colonel Steele was a good deal taken with the Minister's daughter, and everything and every one of interest to her now became of interest to him; and he resolved to know how much she liked Dr. Catherwood, and in what way she liked him. To which end he said, sitting down beside her behind the table during a few moments of quiet:

"So you are going to take Dr. Catherwood as your accountant, and not me? I own I had hoped you placed confidence enough in me to have allowed me the pleasure of settling your accounts for you, and bringing you out superior to Miss Clybourne. But I see my friend the Doctor has inspired you with more faith. What can the reason be, I wonder?"

"Oh, but I have known Dr. Catherwood so much longer, you see," said Christine, lightly, snapping backward and forward the key in the little box which contained the money.

"So much longer?" repeated Colonel Steele; "how much longer, pray?"

"Oh, I have known Dr. Catherwood since—since last December—yes—the twelfth of last December."

"And me since June—last June—but you don't remember the date, of course."

"Oh, yes, I do. It was the eighteenth, at Mrs. Sherman's party—I remember the date perfectly—I have it written on the bouquet I carried that night. It was my first party and my first bouquet, and I could not throw it away."

Colonel Steele happened to know who had given her the bouquet, and he did not feel particularly encouraged at the keenness of her recollection.

"And yet Dr. Catherwood was away all last winter. He has told me he stayed till May at his plantation. Now, I don't see that he has much the advantage of me, in point of time at least. You really have not seen so much more of him after all. What can you possibly know of his character, now, Miss Upham? I am in earnest, I think he is almost a stranger to you."

"Dr. Catherwood began by doing me the greatest kindness any one could possibly have done me," said Christine, in an earnest voice—"and he is papa's friend, and Julian's, and I should be most ungrateful if I did not consider him my best friend, too."

Colonel Steele bit his lip. It is so hard to know how to get along with a girl in society who will persist in speaking sincerity and truth. Badinage and nonsense are in so much better taste. But somehow it suited this young person; it was quite becoming to her, though it made her awkward to deal with sometimes; one did not expect her to be coquettish or to say extravagant and unreal things, as one expects others of her age to do; though her laughter was as merry and her sense of humor quite as keen as that of any other person. It was this very difference from others that had fascinated the worldly

wise Colonel, though he felt so much like complaining of it now.

People are very apt to be unjust when they are in love, and the worldly-wise Colonel was a good deal in love; enough so to walk away with a very jealous coldness when Dr. Catherwood came back from his little flirtation with Miss Clybourne.

"Well," said Christine, with a very pretty look of interest in her face as he sat down beside her, "did she tell your fortune for you?"

"Oh, yes, and gave me three or four letters, too. In fact, she made a great deal of money out of me. I shall have to buy up all that is left upon your table to make it even; all your bon-bons are not gone?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Christine, with an *ennuyé* look; "I am so tired of money—I have talked of it all the afternoon. I'm very glad I'm not a man, to have to talk of it all day."

"I don't believe you have much financial ability," said her companion, taking the box of money from her; "and I see you are beginning to look pale. I am going to take you out of this noisy tent for sanitary reasons, and install little Miss Richfield here instead, at least for half an hour; Mrs. Sherman cannot object to that."

"I am afraid she will," said Christine, with a longing look out into the grounds. "The whole affair ends a little before eight, and it is almost seven now; it will not do for me to go."

"It will not do for you to stay," said Dr. Catherwood, getting up. "What's the younger Miss Richfield's name—Caroline?"

"Oh, Dr. Catherwood—stay—I am afraid she will not like it—she may be tired, too."

"Nothing will give her greater pleasure, I am positive," said he, sedately, going towards the Richfield table.

Christine looked after him rather nervously; he went up to the little Miss Richfield and said something that made her blush and look very bright, go towards her elder sister, hold

an explanatory whisper with her, and then follow Dr. Catherwood towards the bon-bon table.

The fact was, little Miss Caroline had been standing behind her pincushions, socks, sacks, and baby-bait all the afternoon, and had not had a nibble, and she was delighted to leave them in charge of her older sister, and go off towards a more distinguished quarter of the tent, where were officers and city gentlemen and a general look of high life and conviviality.

The Richfields were pillars of the Church, but extremely plain and humdrum in their manner of life, and the younger members of the family were perfectly dazzled by the glories of the Hill. Dr. Catherwood installed Miss Caroline in Christine's place, having laid hands, in passing, on an unemployed young officer, and done him the favor to introduce him to Miss Caroline, and commit the care of the money-box to him; all of which made Miss Caroline feel that the world was a most intoxicating place, and that the crisis of her life had come.

"How well you managed it," said Christine, as she followed Dr. Catherwood through the crowd to the entrance of the tent; "I think you always do as you want to do with people, though you are so very quiet."

"And yet you never are willing to trust to me to accomplish anything; do you know that, my dear Miss Upham?"

"Miss Upham! Oh, does not that sound droll! I could almost fancy I had Colonel Steele's arm instead of Dr. Catherwood's."

"If the fancy pleases you, I could easily manage to make it a reality. You have only to say so, you know," said Dr. Catherwood, pausing as they were turning into a diverging path.

"Oh, *je vous en prie*," cried Christine, with a little shudder, clasping her left hand in her right one on his arm, and moving forward.

"Oh, then, I will do as well for the moment," said Dr.

Catherwood, with a satisfied little smile, as they went on into the path.

"Yes, for the moment, and the hour, and the day, and the always," said the childish beauty, forgetting to unclasp her hands, which looked exquisitely white upon his sleeve. "Oh, Dr. Catherwood, how tired I do get of strangers. How do you manage to be so pleasant to everybody? Sometimes I think it does not make much difference to you, really, who is talking to you. Do you know, if it were not you, I should think it was something a little like hypocrisy?"

"Let me explain," said he, with a half-serious smile. "What would become of me, do you think, if I went through the world with my soul in my eyes, as you go? It is a questionable experiment for a woman; but for a man, believe me, it would be an unwise and dangerous business. Why, think of all that meets a man; the deceit, the folly, the enmity, and the flattery; his only protection is to see without seeming to see; to feel without evincing feeling. He need not be a hypocrite, Christine, because he keeps his visor down. You know you would not think him wise if he went into the fight without it."

"But it need not be a visor of smiles—smiles for everybody."

"I pity the man who would go through the world with stern looks for everybody. His heart would not be in the right place, Christine, I think. Little children, women, sufferers, and even men who are trying to get the better of him—all are objects of benevolence to a man who has a Christian soul within him. I do not see the necessity for stern looks."

"Oh, that is not what I mean: benevolence is all very well; but I don't see why you need look just alike for everybody—why you need look just the same when you talk to little Miss Richfield, who isn't your friend, as when you talk to me, who am."

"Now, I leave it to—to the acacias that are above us both, if I looked anything as I look now when I talked to the little Richfield."

They had been walking through a winding, well-kept path that led through a grove of acacias at the extreme border of the Sherman grounds; a little knoll rising at the right was crowned with a rustic summer-house; just as they paused before it, Christine turned, laughing, and looked up in his face.

"No," she said, "truth compels me to state, I do not think you did."

Her companion's eyes were blue; eyes that grew tender and full of light only rarely. Christine had never before seen them wear exactly that expression.

At that moment there was a sudden rustle in the shrubbery beside them; some one darted across the path and disappeared into the bushes opposite. It was Julian Upham, with Harry Gilmore in hot chase.

"Oh, there will be some trouble!" exclaimed Christine, letting go her companion's arm, and starting a step forward. "What shall I do!"

"I will go after them," said Dr. Catherwood, with a contraction of the brow, "and bring him back. Don't be anxious at all. I will send Harry home, and bring Julian here with me, if you wish it."

"I wish you'd let me go with you," she said, earnestly; "I don't want to go back to the tent yet, and they haven't probably gone beyond the mill."

"Very well," he said, "if you are not afraid of injuring your dress, come with me;" and he led the way across the shrubbery into the fields that led directly to the mill.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE END OF HARRY'S HOLIDAY.

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity."
WORDSWORTH.

THE evening was lovely, and perhaps the transition from the gay and noisy scene they had just left made the quiet more beautiful and noticeable than ordinary to Christine and her companion. The sun had been gone about fifteen minutes from the sky, which it had left all of a clear, golden color in the west, and all a pale-blue in the south, growing faintly pink in the distant east. There was not a breath of wind; the mill-wheel was silent, and the mill-stream along which they were walking was fair and tranquil "as the river of a dream."

They had come to look for Julian, to be sure, but they were not walking very fast. Occasionally Dr. Catherwood stopped and listened for the boys' voices, but he could hear nothing; and occasionally Christine called Julian's name, but elicited no response.

"They may have gone down to the miller's house," he said, looking that way. "You had better wait here by the dam while I go and see."

The miller's house lay down in a sort of meadow, below the level of the mill-pond, and Christine sat down upon the bridge, while her companion went off in the direction of it. He walked a good deal quicker after he left her, but it was some minutes before he reached the gate; and when he was out of

sight she turned and looked at the old mill, with its great wheel and open doors, and thought of the night when she had looked at them in a trance of terror, calling Julian's name across the ice. How long ago that night seemed!—what changes and trials in her care of Julian! Sometimes she reproached herself for feeling the burden so much less than formerly, though it was still the occupation and duty of her life; she did not understand how it had come to pass that so much of it had gone on Dr. Catherwood; that he in her place was bearing now so much the heavier part of the responsibility. She could not have had it otherwise if she had chosen; it was Dr. Catherwood's way to do as he thought fit. But how could she have lived without him—how have sustained this weight upon her conscience, if he had not helped her to see things right, with his clear man's sense, and made her willing to come to him in all the thousand little troubles out of which she could not find her way alone.

With her father it would have been almost impossible to have done so; he could not quite have understood her, and could not probably have made her understand him; she would have known she was distressing him by her scruples and alarms, and would soon have learned to keep them to herself. But with Doctor Catherwood it was so different; she had hardly to tell him what she was feeling; he understood it all before she had found the words for it; if it were only a conscientious scruple, an alarm lest she had neglected some duty towards the boy, he had no contempt for it, no impatience with the weakness, but he made her see it was a weakness, and gave her, while he soothed her, steadiness and strength to combat such feelings in the future. If it were some trouble that was tangible, some one of the thousand mischiefs and misfortunes into which the boy was continually dragging himself and her, he only heard it quietly, without showing a shade of annoyance or surprise, and said:

"Leave it to me, there is no need of saying anything to Dr. Upham; I will see to it, and talk to Julian."

The tie between them in that way had become a very close one; confidences about Julian naturally led to confidences in which he was but little mingled; and Dr. Catherwood had read every page of the girl's pure heart, and measured the daily growth of her young mind, before he had been her constant companion for a month. He never allowed her to feel it was unnatural and strange for them to be upon the terms they were; he never made the relations between them so apparent to the world, that the world would catechize her in regard to them. He dreaded jealously the first words that should wake a misgiving in her mind, and for that reason he felt Mrs. Sherman to be his greatest foe.

The companionship of this young girl, just now, was worth more to him than the friendship, and honor, and adulation of all the world; the mind requires such different medicine at different times; and as to Christine, though but a moment ago she had talked earnestly to Colonel Steele about her gratitude to Dr. Catherwood, she rarely felt the burden of it; rarely realized that he was giving up time, and thought, and comfort for her constantly; and never reflected that he was in truth standing to her in an attitude of protection and surveillance that only the tie of family can render wise and safe.

He knew every page of her heart—every page, that is, but one—and that was one that she never turned back to herself; it was the initial page of her life's history, and was reflected in every succeeding one; she knew it word for word, but she never dared to dwell upon it, never opened it and re-read and reflected on it. Her sister's death-bed scene was still most vivid and most painful in her recollection; the consequences of it she had not as yet thought very deeply of; her vow she felt separated her from others of her age, and made her different from them; but she had not, from her very innocence and sim-

plicity, and from the satisfaction of her heart in its friendship and in her domestic ties, felt its strength and cruelty. She had within a year outgrown the morbid sensitiveness of her childhood—the spring of youth animated her spirits, and a healthier tone had taken possession of her mind. The frightful, sleepless nights, or equally frightful and exhausting dreams in which she had lived over and over again the hour that preceded Helena's death, were of very rare occurrence now; natural vigor was returning to her nerves, and was throwing off these unhealthy visitations. How much of this change was owing to the influence of Dr. Catherwood's determined and judicious treatment of her delicate physique, and equally delicately organized mind, it was impossible to judge; certain it was, however, that from the time of his first coming among them, she had seemed an altered and more natural child, and grew each day healthier and happier.

This evening, as she sat waiting on the bridge watching for the return of her companion, some thoughts of the difference he had made in her life came over her, and a truer estimate of their relations suggested itself to her mind for the moment. But she thought still only as a child thinks, and the veil was upon her heart.

She was sitting in a dreamy, listless attitude upon the bridge, listening idly to the soft rush of the water over the dam, when a sound of voices met her ear—angry voices smothered instantly, then breaking out again after a moment in involuntary vehemence. Christine knew them instantly—Julian's shrill tone and Harry's angry muttering. She sprang up and ran forward; the mill door stood open; and at the further extremity of the building another door stood open—a door that looked down over the water some thirty feet below. The sight of this door always gave Christine a shiver; she had watched it in fascination as a child, when the miller and his man lowered barrels down from it to the boats below, and had felt certain, if she went near enough to it to look over she should throw herself down

into the blue and rippling surface underneath. The surface was not blue and rippling as she caught sight of it now; it was smooth and glassy, and gilded with the color of the sky—and immediately before it, in bold relief against this open space in the dark building, were the two boys they had come to seek, in a close wrestle with each other, fierce angry faces, limbs grappling each other with eager vehemence of purpose, eyes and voices both emitting sudden and threatening flames of anger. They were not three feet from the open door; and blinded with rage and intent only on one thing, it was not strange that at one moment they were at its very brink, at another had staggered several feet away from it.

Christine's blood ran cold; she started forward, uttered a scream, and leaned against a post beside her for support. The scream did not reach or penetrate the ears of the passionate and reckless children. The time that passed seemed long to Christine, but it was in fact not more than twenty seconds, during which the boys reeled forward a second time to the very brink of the door-sill, disputing desperately every inch of the floor, which was smooth, and worn, and slippery with the fine white powder that covered everything within the mill. Harry, with a sudden effort of his great strength, threw himself on his slight antagonist and pressed him down upon his knees; it was the first sign who might be the conqueror; a dreadful expression of rage lighted Julian's face for an instant as he felt himself losing ground. He made a sudden movement as of giving way, which relaxed his adversary's grasp, then a sudden spring and regained his feet, and with his one free hand aimed a quick blow between the other's eyes.

A howl of pain, a relaxing of his hold upon his foe, one misstep, a clutch towards the door-post which he could not see, a reeling movement, a heavy plunge in the water below, and Harry Gilmore's holiday was over, and the dark waves were settling themselves into calm above his senseless body.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. BROCKHULST FORGETS TO TELL HIS BEADS.

"Pleasures night and day are hovering
Round their prey of weary hours,
Weakness and unrest discovering
In the best of human powers."

MILNES.

CHRISTINE did not appear again at the Hill that night, neither did Dr. Catherwood. Colonel Steele watched for them with jealous eyes and flirted very desperately with Madeline, to show the world he had no interest in the auburn-haired girl from the Parsonage, about whose absence every one was wondering. He did not say he had seen her go away with Dr. Catherwood, for the reason that he wished to keep that little piece of intelligence in his own hands for his own use by-and-by, and no one else seemed to have noticed their departure.

Mrs. Sherman was very much exercised and made quite a bruit about it, but fortunately she had too many strings to her bow that night to harp with her usual pertinacity upon Christine. She was busy beyond all precedent. "The Fair so far had been a complete success, and it only remained for her to render the evening at her house satisfactory and delightful, and the Bishop was deposed for ever. The Bishop, though in open hostility to the whole affair, had with great hardihood and malice come to the tent for a little while during the afternoon strictly *en spectateur*, and had been obviously chagrined at the success and the brilliancy of the affair. Of course she had not appeared to give in at all, had criticized the work, sneered at the clap-trap character of the institution called the post-office, put down her

ice-cream with an expression of face that could not be mistaken, shaken her head decidedly at the offer of plum-cake, and smothered a derisive smile at the sight of the decorations. But still it was unanimously decided she had been chagrined and much surprised, and Mrs. Sherman felt completely satisfied so far. She had charged Madeline with the rather questionable duty of sending her through the post-office a spiteful little letter, but she got the better of Madeline by declining to take it out, saying she had no correspondent who wrote such an unsightly hand. After that Madeline felt herself at liberty to be very saucy to her, and to set all her admirers to the task of quizzing her; but with all their combined cleverness they did not make much headway. One point, certainly, the Bishop made. Madeline, with all the glories of the day upon her, the envied of all the neglected young saleswomen, the admired of all the jaunty young gentlemen from town, had a restless, unsatisfied ambition in her heart. Mr. Brockhulst had not been near her, nor, as far as she knew, looked at her for one moment. She knew it was doubtful whether he would go to the Hill in the evening; she had resolved he should speak to her before he went away, which, as it was seven o'clock, he might do any moment. She had determined he should be fascinated with her that night, and restore her to her former position with him, and had acted over and over again in mind the little scene of reconciliation, or reinstatement, or whatever it might be called. But here were the precious moments slipping away, and she was no nearer it than she had been at the beginning of the afternoon. She was growing so uneasy and restless, she scarcely could talk to her admirers as became an accomplished belle, and her eyes followed the young clergyman rather imprudently about the tent. For Madeline, though very clever, and a coquette by nature, was an indifferent actress when she found her feelings much enlisted. The Bishop, sitting down to rest herself near Madeline's table, rose at last, and said as she passed her:

"Well, Miss Madeline, I think you'll have to give up counting change if Mr. Brockhulst stays in sight much longer. Why don't you send for him and done with it? I'm on my way out; what shall I tell him for you?"

That was the point the Bishop made; the blood rushed to Madeline's face, her eyes fell—she could not command her voice for several seconds.

"Tell him?" she said, at last, rallying and looking up from the change she had been bending over in confusion. "Tell him there is a letter for him in the office."

"Very well, I will. I have no doubt it is an interesting one."

So, while she strode across the room towards the young minister, Madeline sank down into a chair and drew a sheet of paper towards her hurriedly—what should she write? This was a flagrant piece of coquetry, considering the terms he had placed her on. She should not have dreamed of doing it if it had not been for this wicked and impertinent enemy's attack. She wished she had only kept her self-possession and not sent her on such a foolish embassy. She should be disgraced when he came up if she had not a letter ready, and her fingers shook so she could not have written a line, even if she had thought of any line to write, and she could not keep her eyes from straying over in the direction in which the Bishop went on her most unhappy errand.

How would he take it? She saw him start a little, bow stiffly, and turn slowly to approach the table where she sat. Her eyes dropped on the paper—oh, what should she write!—he would be here even before she could fold up and direct a blank sheet of paper. He must be looking at her now.

He might have been, but he was not. The young clergyman's face was quite a study as he came up and stood before the table at which Madeline was sitting, looking down in confusion at her paper. He was perfectly pale, and his eyes were

turned away from her. He looked like a young monk, telling his beads with averted face, while Folly and her giddy troop passed by. Madeline, with crimson cheeks, agitated movements, and softened eyes, bent her beautiful head before him.

A moment passed of painful silence, another—and then she lifted her eyes timidly, and met his turned towards her for the first time. Ah, fatal glance, that undid all the rigid work of the past three weeks of penance! She was so beautiful; and her eyes had such an imploring, deprecating, almost frightened look. She forgot the jaunty young gentlemen with their straw hats and lilac gloves; she forgot she was a coquette, and a beauty; and all that; for the moment she only thought of the Parsonage gate over which the honeysuckle grew, and the pale face in the dim church afterwards. She was wholly swayed by the little bit of sentiment that she had allowed to creep into her heart latterly, and when she raised her eyes they were full of dangerous feeling.

"Oh, Mr. Brockhulst," she said, speaking confusedly and quickly, "I am so sorry Mrs. Van Riper sent you, for there is no letter for you—it was only her idea. I hope you're not displeased."

There was a moment more of question and reply made without much reference to common-sense and intelligent interchange of thought, and then Mr. Brockhulst turned to go away a little paler than when he had come up.

All the coquette in Madeline's heart sprang out of ambush then; he should not go in that manner, he should not escape her so.

"You are coming to the Hill this evening, Mr. Brockhulst?" he said, with a half-veiled brightness in her eyes as she lifted them to his. "It—is so long since you have been there—I mean—to stay for more than a few minutes. Mrs. Sherman will be disappointed."

Mr. Brockhulst forgot to count his beads that minute; he

looked into Folly's beautiful eyes, and pledged himself to come that evening to the Hill, and then he went away to another stall in the fair, with a miserable consciousness that he had lost a terrible amount of ground.

CHAPTER XIX.

VALE À DEUX TEMPS.

"Hers was the subtlest spell by far
Of all that sets young hearts romancing;
She was the queen, the rose, the star,
And when she danced—oh, heaven, her dancing!"


PRIMO.

"I WONDER where Christine can be!" said Madeline to Colonel Steele about half-past nine o'clock that evening, as she rested a moment with him on the western balcony, after one of those prolonged and breathless waltzes for which he was so famous. "It is just like her to have gone home to read the paper to her father, or make jelly for some of Dr. Catherwood's poor patients."

"Ah!" said the Colonel, carelessly, "Dr. Catherwood has then a benevolent turn of mind?"

"Oh, not extraordinarily so, I think; only a physician has so many calls upon his charity, and I believe he turns them all over to the Parsonage. I really think he imposes on Christine; no other girl would stand it, but then she is like no other girl. For instance, he is always there, just as much at home as if it were his own house, and yet he never thinks of paying Christine any of the attentions which their hospitality deserves. He treats her in a way that cannot flatter her—as if she were a child or a near relative; or, in fact, sometimes as if she were not in existence or a perfect stranger to him. Now that's not flattering, Colonel Steele; do you think it is?"

"Well, but Miss Clybourne, think of the difference in their ages; Miss Christine is so very young."



"Why, yes, if you call seventeen so very young. But Dr. Catherwood is not so very old, Colonel Steele; I do not call thirty-five or thirty-seven old; do you? And I call Dr. Catherwood a very handsome and a very fascinating man, and if Christine were not like a little nun, she would not have her heart in her own keeping now, seeing him so often."

"Miss Clybourne, that is an admission. How often do *you* see him, may I ask?"

"Not every day, by any means. But I do acknowledge, when Dr. Catherwood talks to me, I think he is perfection, and I wish he thought it was his duty to come to see mamma as often as he goes to see the Rector; and I am sure of one thing, I would make better use of my advantages than Christine makes of hers, the silly child. Why, she is a study, that Christine, I do assure you, Colonel Steele."

Colonel Steele smiled sublimely and indifferently, as if the only study that had any interest for him was endorsed Clybourne, M., for Colonel Steele had been a lady's man too long to talk with admiration of one woman to another.

He was very willing to keep Madeline on the subject on which she had begun, however, and tried to draw her out upon it; but she was by far too restless to be long upon one thing, and could not be contented unless she was being flattered or excited in some way. She liked Colonel Steele very well while he was flattering her, or dancing with her, or making her walk up and down the parlors with him, while everybody's eyes followed them with admiration. She had said, truly too, while Dr. Catherwood talked to her she thought he was perfection, and wished very much that she could make it worth his while to fall in love with her. Even Mr. Leslie's triple extract of devotion pleased her for the moment, and set her to dreaming of what true love might be. It was all excitement and uncertainty in her immature and undisciplined heart as yet; a thousand contradictory impulses emanated from it—a thousand

delusive and uncertain rays gleamed out of it—a thousand unformed thoughts and wishes struggled in it; it was harsh to blame her for deluding others, when she was as much bewildered as she bewildered them. What place the young minister had in reality in this half-grown, ignorant, and fitful heart, she could not have told herself; her mother watching her night and day could not have told, the world with its sharpest lorgnette at its eye could not have told correctly.

She seemed ambitious, because she was high-spirited and full of an eager hopefulness that had formed no worthier aim than had been placed before her. She seemed vain, because she was overflowing with the happiness that comes from winning love and homage, and because she had not the discretion to conceal the source from whence her pleasure came. She seemed deceitful and coquettish, because her eyes and her lips both spoke feeling that they did not long retain; both uttered that which was only truth for the moment—that which was called up by what she saw in others, and which faded before she recognised its shape herself. The true heart, the true love, were struggling into birth; it was all chaos now. A miserable man he, whose happiness hung upon what he could gather of her heart from what he saw upon the surface.

“Another waltz, Miss Clybourne? That music is delicious,” half whispered Colonel Steele as he caught the strains within. Madeline said yes, with a beaming look of pleasure as she caught them too, for music set her pulses beating always.

In a moment they were in the room, her hand in his, his arm upon her waist, just ready to move down the room in the lovely *deux temps* motion, when her eye fell upon something that made her start and pause, and withdraw her hand suddenly from his.

“Oh, I don’t think I’ll dance,” she said, drawing back.

He gave her a look of surprise that made her falter and color.

"I—that is—you had better ask somebody else. I do not think I can dance any more; I wish you would excuse me."

She had caught sight of Mr. Brockhulst entering the room, and her impulse had been to get out of the position she was in, and not to let him see her dancing. She did not put this into words. She did not define to herself the feeling that made her shrink from being seen by him with Colonel Steele's arm upon her waist, and with the eyes of all the room upon her as she floated through it to that most bewitching music. She had never felt before that it was wrong to dance. She had never felt before that there was anything to blush about in that arm upon her waist. These thoughts flashed through her mind for the first time as she caught sight of Mr. Brockhulst's face, though he had not seen her, though he had looked no reproach. She felt, though she did not know she felt it, the true test of purity and womanliness at that moment; there was but one who had a right to what she was giving to every one that asked it. She passed through a trial at that short instant that gave its color to her whole future life. That sudden doubt, that strong conviction—how could she have put them aside?

But she did; she listened a moment too long to her companion's pleading whisper—a moment too long to the alluring music; she subjected her feelings to too material and commonplace a criticism; she vowed to herself she could not see the wrong. She only did what all the world was doing; she would not listen to such scruples; she did not care enough what Mr. Brockhulst thought to make her lose her pleasure; after all, he might not care; and if he did, did she? And so she yielded to the embrace that a moment before she had shrunk from in alarm, and floated down the room with as perfect a grace as ever, but with less perfect innocence.

And Mr. Brockhulst, making his way across the room, caught suddenly the beautiful and hateful vision, and felt as if his life were worthless to him after he had seen it. He was new to all

this—the world was the world to him as yet, and one of his three enemies. His face must have shown his dismay and pain, for Madeline, pausing at last, glanced at him and felt her heart sink involuntarily. His eyes were averted and he was near the door, looking as if he felt himself most miserably out of place, and as if he cared for nothing so much as to escape from the scene in which he found himself. Madeline would have given worlds to have undone the work of the last ten minutes; the music had ceased, the thrill of excitement was over; she was weary and disenchanted, and Colonel Steele, looking heated and commonplace, seemed almost impertinent in his care of her, urging her to go into the hall for the fresh air, to let him get her an ice, to sit down by the window, to do anything, in fact, to allow him to show his right and his desire to be devoted.

How she hated herself! If she only had been firm! She wished she were Christine reading the paper to her father in the quiet old Parsonage parlor, or the little Richfield sitting in dull propriety between her mother and her elder sister near the folding doors. She looked discontented and weary, and when some gentleman came up to ask her to dance with him again, she refused haughtily and ungently, and then felt disgraced a moment after, and the next comer found her more gracious and less dignified than she had ever been before. She consented to let Colonel Steele get her an ice, and she walked up and down the hall with two or three of his military confrères while he went for it, they keeping up a laughing rivalry for her favor, and making that open and extravagant show of devotion which may be amusing, but is never flattering to a woman.

Madeline felt this; she felt these officers would not have talked so to Christine; she felt that in some way she was lowered by her belleship.

The fact was, she was too high-toned for the rôle she had undertaken to play; she was too finely made to be the popular beauty she aspired to be; she could not be an indiscriminate

favorite without damage to her delicacy of feeling. These men did not understand her, because she was not commonplace; her beauty was striking and brilliant, and it attracted them; but a soulless and less refined beauty would have attracted them as much. Madeline was refined, she had soul, but they could not understand the difference between her and the other girls they danced with in society, except that she was handsomer and fresher. Her manners had the *abandon* and gaiety of youth, sometimes the daring and impetuosity of talent and wit that she had not learned to smother; they could not detect that freedom of thought and levity of character were very different things. And by their treatment of her they were leading her fast to what they supposed her to be; or rather, to more than they supposed her to be, for commonplace was impossible to her, and satisfaction in such homage as they could pay her could not last long.

She passed and repassed Mr. Brockhulst standing near the door talking with ill-concealed want of interest to a group of three or four; she tried to catch his eye, to loiter long enough in passing to give him an opportunity of joining her—but it was in vain. He never glanced towards her, never gave the least indication that he knew of her vicinity. At length impatient of this treatment, and lacking the self-control to conceal her chagrin, she declined continuing her promenade any further, and sat down on a sofa near the group in which her interest centred. She was too abstracted to be agreeable long to her admirers; her eagerness to catch the voices of her neighbors interfered extremely with listening to what the admirers had to say to her, and soon she was left with only one, who stayed more from good manners than great interest.

The sofa on which they were sitting was near the front door, the group of gentlemen around Mr. Brockhulst stood just beyond them, beside the first parlor door. Madeline presently saw a man come up the steps of the piazza and look anxiously

and awkwardly around him for some one to whom to make his errand known. He was a roughly dressed man, in dusty miller's clothes, and his anxious face and working-day apparel contrasted strongly with the festival scene which he was approaching. He looked at the knocker and at the bell, and seemed rather afraid of both, hesitating awkwardly and glancing up and down the piazza and the hall.

"What does that man want?" said Madeline, getting up and going to the door, followed by Mr. Leslie.

The man responded to her inquiry by saying: "The minister, Miss; they say he's here."

"Oh yes," said Madeline, starting forward. "I'll tell him."

But before she had said the words, he had turned quickly and was coming to the door, showing he had been listening though he had not been looking.

"What is it, Tom?" he said, laying his hand upon the doorpost, the man standing just outside the sill, Madeline and her companion just inside it. "Any trouble at the mill?"

"Bad enough, sir," said the man. "The miller's boy is drowned, and the miller's wife, she's in a dreadful way; and the boss himself, he says to me: 'Tom, run, ask the minister to come down; maybe he'll think o' something he can say to her;' and so they told me at your place you was here, and so I come here for you if you can spare the time."

"Drowned!" repeated the minister, with an expression of the deepest feeling. "Tom, are you quite sure there is no hope—that there isn't some mistake?"

Tom shook his head. "You wouldn't think so if you'd been with me and Dr. Catherwood when we drew him up from under that big wheel, as dead and cold as if he'd been there for a week—and heavy! You never felt nothing like the weight of that poor boy. It was horrid business takin' him down to his mother—though the Doctor kept tellin' her there was a good many chances he might be revived. But they've been

workin' over him these two nours and more, and there isn't many chances left, you see—if ever there was any at the start.”

The minister, during this recital, had gone to the table near him for his hat, and without a look or word to any one, had hurried down the steps accompanied by the man.

“That's where Christine is, I suppose,” said Madeline, thoughtfully, looking after them. “Harry Gilmore was at the Fair this afternoon with Julian. It seems frightful. Mr. Leslie go ask mamma if she is not almost ready to go home.”

CHAPTER XX.

A VIGIL.

*"The Saints will aid, if men will call,
For the blue sky bends over all."*

"CHRISTINE, go home," said Dr. Catherwood in a low tone, taking her by the hand and leading her out into the little porch before the miller's house. "I have desired you to go before; now I must command it—see," he added, taking out his watch and leaning back to look at it by the light from the room they had just left. "See, it is past twelve, and I did not ask you to go till the boy revived—now there is no excuse. You can do nothing—I shall stay here all night, though I assure you I feel safe about him, and there are Mr. Brockhulst and Tom, and twenty others if I wanted them, to help me in watching over him. You cannot be of any comfort to the mother; I believe her to be half insane, and your presence only has the effect of exciting her just now. Where is your bonnet? There, put it on and go home; it is very dark, but I know you do not mind—I will send Tom, the miller's man, with you for protection."

"But I wish you would let me stay," faltered Christine, imploringly. "If any change should happen."

"But no change will happen," said the Doctor firmly, "except the change we all desire to see; my dear child, this is very foolish!"

For Christine, sinking down upon the bench outside the door, had covered her face with her hands and given way to a burst of tears. He drew the door shut, so that no one within should hear her, and sat down at her side. He did not very much wonder that she had given way at last. He had been watching

her anxiously for several hours, expecting every moment the failure of endurance that had come. He had not had the heart to send her away before he had any hope to give her, though he had felt regret for the injury that the dreadful scene was doing her. The sight of the raving mother, the dumb stricken father, the white, deathlike face of the boy upon the bed, with the deep, black bruise between his eyes, would have been severely trying to such sensitive nerves and such a tender heart as hers, if the dreadful thought that it was all Julian's work, and so all in a manner her responsibility, had not for ever been present in her mind, till she felt, and spoke, and looked like one in a frightful trance.

Dr. Catherwood had, at present, no desire so strong as to get her home and in a way of resting, quieted by the thought that the danger was almost over, and yet he did not dare to leave the house long enough to take her to the Parsonage. He longed to soothe her, but he did not dare to enter on the subject that was now the only thought she had, fearing it would bring up too much to be controlled at present, and yet he must try to quiet her in some way. It was hard not to show her any sympathy, nor allow her to see how his heart had ached for her, and how thoroughly he understood her. So he said quietly, drawing away her hand from her face :

"Don't let them hear you, my dear Christine. It is very natural you should be unnerved after such a long and exciting day. You need rest very much. Let us see ! You were busy all the morning getting things ready for the Fair, and from ten o'clock till seven you were standing in the tent, busy and excited all the time. I doubt if you have had a half hour of quiet since breakfast time this morning."

Christine raised her head and articulated through her sobs : "Do not talk about my resting ; you know it is not that."

"I know it is just that," he said. "I know your nerves are perfectly unstrung by excitement, alarm, and over-fatigue."

"Then why do you reproach me for crying?" she said, sinking back again and covering her face. "Oh! I wish you would tell me if there is *really* any hope, and not try to pacify me as you do!"

"Do you suppose I would deceive you?" he said, seriously.

"No, oh no! not deceive me, exactly; but you are so sorry for me you want to believe so yourself, whatever the truth may be. You know it would kill me if this boy should die, and you try to convince yourself and me that he will live. But he will not! I know before the night is over that little spark is going out. I know it and you fear it, and yet you tell me to go home and rest! Home! How can I get rest at home? That is the last place—I do not ever want to go home again—I wish I could die this moment—I *shall* die with all this load upon me."

"Christine," said her companion, standing beside her and speaking in a firm and serious voice, "I tried to spare you this, and you would have been wiser to have submitted to me and controlled yourself. But since it has expressed itself, let us talk calmly of what I fear you to be incapable of thinking calmly now. It is wiser to strangle doubts and fears than to give them words and make them real; but you have done it and it is too late. In the first place, you cannot fully trust me; you do not think I believe what I have told you in regard to the boy's state. That is unjust, for you cannot recall a single instance in which you can say I have deceived you. I have told you the truth about the boy; I believe he will recover; I did not think of telling you to go away until I was convinced the danger had passed over; and now about the dread of meeting your father and of seeing Julian. You need not tell your father anything unless you choose. I will tell him all to-morrow. And for Julian, would you have had any such feeling about him if he had thrown his companion on the green turf instead of off into the deep water? The fault on his part would have been

the same. He had no intention of doing anything more in this case than he would have had in that. You must judge of sins by their actual intentions, not their accidental results. Harry's design was no more innocent than Julian's; if he had had the strength and skill to do what Julian, aided by accident, has done, Julian would have been lying now where Harry is. Be thankful that things are no worse, and do not think of possibilities, for that is always folly. I ask you not to exaggerate Julian's fault, while I do not attempt to excuse it myself; I shall treat it to him as seriously as if it had had the worst result, and I sincerely hope the alarm he has gone through will have a good effect upon him. This may be the happiest thing for him. I certainly am not without hope that it was for that purpose that it was allowed to happen. Do not endeavor to speak to him yourself about it. Leave that to me; I think I begin to understand him better, and a man always has more authority. If you are willing to be guided by me, do this; go home, satisfied with what I have told you of the boy's condition; do not allow yourself to think, or reason, or look back. You can do none of these things calmly now. You must only try to divert yourself from thought. See no one to-night. Sleep if possible; lie still at all events; I will bring you the earliest reports from here; if I am not at the Parsonage before the family are down, act as if nothing had occurred; meet Julian seriously but simply. Do not give him the impression you are horrified at him, and yet do not be affectionate. Are you willing to do all this and to trust that this once I know best?"

Christine made some sign of assent and rose, taking her bonnet from her companion's hand and going towards the steps without a word.

"Wait till I call Tom," he said; "and now, good-night."

Perhaps he ought not to have been disappointed that her good-night was so languid and docile as she passed out of the gate, followed by Tom, leaving him looking after them, or

rather listening after them, for the night was dense and black, and Christine's white dress was swallowed up by the darkness half a minute after he had parted from her. He only waited for a moment listening for her receding steps along the gravel path, and then laid his hand upon the latch and went back into the room where Harry Gilmore lay feverish and unconscious on the bed, watched over by the pale young minister, and his clumsy-handed, tender-hearted father. The mother, with strangely gleaming eyes, sat beside the hearth, with face averted, beating her foot upon the rug and pressing her lips close together. She was a woman to make one afraid as she looked then—a "bear robbed of her whelps," a fierce lioness crouching beside the lair that treachery and cruelty have desolated, and lashing silently with the wrath and hate that fill her. Dr. Catherwood felt a shiver as he looked at her; there was a dangerous meaning in her eyes as she saw that he came in alone.

"I have sent Miss Upham home," he said, in a low voice, as he passed by her, "and you yourself had better go to bed."

A sneer passed over her features as she turned away her head.

"Richard and Mr. Brockhulst will sit up for the present," he went on, "and I shall not go away at all. You may as well take a little rest; I shall watch every change."

"No doubt you will," she muttered, under her breath; "no doubt, it will be worse for the parson's grandson if you do not bring him through—it will be no fault of yours if Julian Upham sleeps to-morrow night in jail; you'll do your best to bring my boy through this. Oh, yes. I know you will. I know how good you are, all you rich people, and how you held together."

"Listen," said Dr. Catherwood, putting his hand with a pretty heavy emphasis upon her shoulder and speaking into her ear as he leaned down; "let me hear no more of this; as

surely as I do, you will have cause to rue it. I will save the boy if he can be saved, but not because his living or his dying will make a straw's difference in Julian Upham's future. I want you to understand fully, now, at this point, before the doubt about his recovery is quite gone, and before I have spoken to any one but you, that there are witnesses, of whom I am one, who can prove Julian's act was one of self-defence; that Harry was struggling to do what Julian did accidentally. Julian might as well have been the victim. Harry is twice as strong as he, and ought to be ashamed for daring to lay a finger on a boy who isn't half his size. If he gets better, he shall be made an example of, should such a thing occur again. They are both bad boys, though everybody inclines to Julian's side, because he is so little. I do not for my part think Harry is any more to blame than he. He is not wickedly bent, I think, but you have brought him up badly; and this, I hope, will be a lesson to you. You must have some authority over him, or you will see worse scenes than this. I have not said half as much as I might say, or as I meant to say when I began. I am sorry for you, and I should not have spoken, but I thought it best to stop you from making trouble for yourself and for your boy, if he ever lives to feel the need of a fair name and the good-will of those around him. Now, I want quiet in the room, and you must leave it, or be silent and not make a sign that you are here."

Phoebe Gilmore's face was white and her lips purple with the swelling passion that gleamed out from her eyes, but she was mastered by the unexpected sternness and authority of one to whom all looked for sympathy and kindness. It was the first time in her life she ever had been subdued, by man or woman, when her temper had once got possession of her; she was fairly stunned by the force of a will so much stronger than her own, so rough and ruthless, too, where all the world would have been tender and considerate. His hand had been heavy

and strong upon her shoulder, his voice low but stern, with a vehement intention in every accentuated syllable; his eyes, when she once met them, had had a look that she had trembled under. She threw one glance after him as he moved towards the bed, whence a faint moan had come, and then sat like a stone and gave no sign that she heard or had an interest in what was going on around her.

The doctor's check was a little flushed as he bent over the bed, and his cool hand a thought less steady as he laid it on the boy's fevered skin; there was a dark, angry trouble in his eyes, too, unlike their ordinary clear, true light, for, Christian man as he was, he had that moment spoken an untruth, that moment laid a cruel lash on one whose suffering should have made her sacred. It was the only way to manage her, the only way to prevent a scandal and to spare Christine. He had said he would save the boy if he could be saved, but not because it would make a straw's difference in Julian's future. What a strange contradiction was his troubled, darkened glance, as the fever thickened and quickened in the child's swollen veins, as the black bruise between his eyes deepened and grew broader! What a tale his unsteady fingers told as he strove to measure out the draughts, whose effects he watched with such ill-concealed anxiety! He had an interest in Harry Gilmore's safety that he hoped to conceal from others, that he felt made him a coward and a hypocrite. It was all very well to persuade Christine and to force it upon this woman that Julian had no concern in his recovery; but he knew too well what fallacy it was. If this boy died, Julian's future would receive a blight from which it could not be redeemed; the scandal, the publicity of what would follow the death of his young victim, would never be forgotten—would cling to him for life, make him what naturally he inclined to be, would lead him to what nothing but tenderness and watchfulness extreme could save him from—the career of an outlaw and a reprobate. If there were

any good latent in him, this horrid and sickening occurrence would crush it out completely, would ripen into early maturity the evil of his nature.

Julian's doom was written if the miller's son should die ; before the light of morning crept into that low room where he lay it would be decided ; and the hours seemed like a lifetime to the two men who watched beside him.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FEW MINUTES' QUIET TALK ABOUT JULIAN.

"Many a shaft at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant ;
And many a word at random spoken,
May heal or wound a heart that's broken."

"Is your master down?" said Dr. Catherwood, as he came upon the tidy maid next morning sweeping the steps of the Parsonage piazza.

"Not yet, sir," she answered, pausing as he passed, with a very pleasant, blushy smile. "It is half an hour to breakfast-time. No one is down but Master Julian."

"And where is he?" Dr. Catherwood turned shortly round and spoke with something pained and hurried in his tone.

"Gone off to fish, I think, sir; I saw he had a pole and creel. Most likely he is at the brook."

"Send him to me, will you, if he returns before the family come down?" he said, going on into the house.

The windows of the parlor were all open, the cool morning breeze was waving the white curtains, the room was all in order, all fresh from Ann's feather brush and tidying touch. There was no trace of its inhabitants of the night before, the cushions of the sofa were shaken out and smoothed, and laid exactly in their places; the books upon the table were lying at right angles with the edges; Christine's work-box was shut, and the piano was closed and the music-rack was in good order; in fact, the room looked as if it were asleep or in a happy trance. Dr. Catherwood threw himself upon the sofa and pushed the

cushion under his head. He was tired, though he did not care to acknowledge it. Even the most perfect physique feels a little languor under the trial of a sleepless night and intense mental activity for many hours.

Half an hour to breakfast, he thought, as his eyes fell on the clock; that was a real annoyance, for he was hungry, and had no time to lose, besides. What should he do? Why, wait of course; and so his troubled eye closed, and his knit forehead smoothed itself out, and he slept profoundly.

Christine coming down presently, gave a start and almost dropped the vase of flowers she held, as she caught sight of him asleep upon the sofa. She came in softly after a moment, darkened the blinds a little, threw a sofa blanket over him, and stole away to the piazza to watch for his awaking through the window. When he awoke, it was to see her face watching his through the white curtains, like an angel looking through the clouds. It was gone like a gleam of light, though; as he raised his eyes, he called "Christine," and presently she came in at the door looking pale and frightened, and stopping as far from the sofa as she could, and yet be in the room.

"Is breakfast ready?" he said, not getting up, but throwing the sofa blanket back.

"In a moment," she said, turning and about to disappear.

"Come here," he said, "I want to speak to you. Is your father down?"

"No—that is—I believe he isn't well this morning; he will not come down."

"So we shall take our breakfast alone together. After you ring the bell for Ann, come here; I want to see you, as I said."

Christine went across the room and rang the bell for Ann, and then came and sat down beside him. Madeline would have been very much shocked that he did not rise, only passed his hand through his hair and pushed the sofa cushion a little higher, and lay looking at Christine, who sat before him with a

curious expression. "I am desperately tired," he said, pulling out his watch. "I must have been asleep three quarters of an hour; how long since you came down?"

"About that time," Christine said, faintly.

"And you have been waiting for me? Why did you not wake me up?"

"Why? I was very glad that you should have some sleep; knew you must be tired."

"But if you will tell the truth, you will say you were very glad when I waked up; you know you want to hear how the boy is, though you do not dare to ask me."

"I know you would not be here if he were not better," she said, half reassured by his quiet manner, though not quite able yet to banish doubt.

"Well, Christine, thank God, he is better," said her companion with a sudden movement, rising and taking her hand in his. "Heaviness has endured for a night; you and I never will forget."

For a moment the tears swam in Christine's eyes. "Voyons," he said, in a changed tone, letting go her hand and turning to the window, "ring again for Ann; I am not only tired but hungry."

"Ann is coming," Christine said, going to the table quickly and bending down to make the tea. Ann put the biscuits and the omelette, and the thin slices of pink ham upon the table, and placing a chair said: "Shall I call Dr. Catherwood, Miss?"

Ann was rather sentimental about the visitor and her young mistress; she and the laundry-maid were quite agreed that something would come of it. She always watched Christine very sharply when Dr. Catherwood was there, and she saw that there were tears upon her eyelashes as she said yes, and sat down.

They had their breakfast quite en tête-à-tête. Julian did not

come in, and while Ann went up stairs to take a biscuit and a cup of coffee to her master's room, Dr. Catherwood said :

"Send away Ann, will you? I want to have a few minutes' quiet talk with you about Julian, while I am finishing my breakfast."

A few minutes' quiet talk about Julian! A few minutes' quiet talk about the sword that was flashing above her head swaying by a hair; a few minutes' quiet talk about the pain that swelled her heart to bursting at the mention of his name. Dr. Catherwood knew that she had eaten all the breakfast that she could before he spoke, and this time was as good as any other. So after Ann was sent away with an intelligent elevation of the eyebrows, as she softly closed the door, he said in an easy tone, though not a trifling one, as he pushed his plate of fruit back and leaned forward on his arm :

"Julian's a bad boy, Christine, there is no denying it, and I have been thinking latterly you could not do a better thing than to send him away to school. He's fourteen now, and he needs more discipline than he can get at home. I do not think his companions here are altogether the most improving for him, and though I like Mr. Brockhulst very much, I do not think him particularly well fitted to manage such a boy as Julian. I have thought about it a good deal; it is no new idea, and this last escapade has only confirmed me in it. Your father, I fancy, would approve of it."

"It is impossible," said Christine, quickly; "I hope you will not speak to him about it. Julian cannot go away from home; it is utterly impossible."

"I do not understand," said Dr. Catherwood, surprised at her decision. "You do not think it would benefit him?"

"There are reasons that make it utterly out of the question," she returned, hastily—then paused and looked up in alarm lest she had been rude.

"Suppose you tell me what they are," he said, with a smile,

meeting her eye. "We are *en rapport* about this matter, are we not? and I cannot even conjecture why you feel so about his leaving you."

"I am afraid I cannot tell you," said Christine, looking troubled.

"Perhaps I can save you the trouble. Is it because you cannot bear to part with him? That would do for a mother to say, but not for you. You love Julian faithfully and dutifully, but he does not add to the pleasure of your life. You would be much younger and lighter-hearted if he were away from you a while. He is a great, a wearing, a constant trial to you."

Christine frowned and turned her face away; she felt that no one had a right to say that to her.

"Besides, it would be a weakness I should regret to see in you, keeping him by you to save yourself from any silly scruple or uneasiness about him. By-and-by he must leave you; whether for his good or evil. He cannot or will not stay always at home. You will do well to anticipate the necessity and send him when it may be of benefit to him."

"He will not go till he is old enough to do without me, and to know how to defend himself against—against—"

"Against whom? They tell you dreadful stories about schoolboys; no doubt, but you must remember they are not many of them founded on fact. I have been a boy myself, you know; ever so long ago, to be sure, but not so long but that I can remember how many boys I thrashed, and how many boys thrashed me. Julian is able to take care of himself, depend upon it. He will be cock of the walk before he has been at school a month; he will need no one to defend him."

"I am not so foolish, Dr. Catherwood. I am not thinking about that. I know Julian will not suffer as much as most boys in that way. It is not that I mean. You cannot understand me. The reasons that make it impossible to send Julian away would apply to no other child on earth—he is one alone by

himself, poor boy. He must never go away from here till he is a man. He has a home, though he lacks all else that other children have."

"Tell me," said her companion, with hesitation and anxiety; "you cannot mean—I am afraid this seems unwarrantable—but you know how deep the interest that I feel—it is not possible that the expenses of his education are any difficulty. Forgive me for asking, Christine—but I had always understood—I had never had a doubt—his—his mother's fortune was ample for all that."

Christine colored a little, then forced herself to speak. "I am sure if any one has a right to know, you have, Dr. Catherwood. I ought to have told you before, perhaps, but everything connected with—with that time, is so painful. He has not anything, I suppose; all the money went before they came to us. But that would never be a difficulty. What they call mine, you know, is just the same as his. I should never have used a quarter of it, even if I had not promised he should have the half."

"Promised," said her companion, raising his head; "promised whom?"

"Helena—my sister—his mother," she returned, in a low voice.

"And your father consented to this?" he said, rising and walking backward and forward through the room and stopping before her.

"My father knows nothing about it," she said, looking up quickly; "and that is what I want to say, you must never speak to him about it; I said he should never know."

"Ah!" he said, with a sigh of relief, "that is all right. I shall never mention it to him, you may be sure."

There was a pause, while Dr. Catherwood walked up and down the room, and Christine pushed her chair back from the table.

"Well," he said, after a few moments standing and looking out of the window, his face away from her, "then, is it that you do not want to go to him about it, and make any confession of your promise? Because I could arrange it for you, if you chose, without any necessity of speaking to him on that matter."

"It is not that," said Christine, speaking as if it cost her a great effort; "my father would not spare anything in educating Julian. He knows how I would feel, and his own income is sufficient to give him every advantage. He shall have a tutor; he shall not be neglected; but he must not go away from home. I cannot break my promise."

Her companion turned suddenly towards her, but averted his face again without speaking.

"I wish you knew, and I did not have to tell you," she said, in a voice that sounded very plaintive; "I want you to know all about him, but it hurts me so to think it over, much more to talk of it to any one. We have been very unhappy here, Dr. Catherwood, though we all seem well enough now. I am the only one left of a great many that were a great deal better and more lovely; and the best, the most beautiful of all, had better have died when she was a little child like the others, than have lived to see the misery she did. That was Julian's mother, the oldest of all, and my father's darling. Oh, if I had only died in her place, and left her to comfort him and to take care of Julian! But that could not be, and I must try to do the best I can for them. What made her misery was—well, it was the worst thing that can happen to a woman—an unhappy marriage; a marriage to a man that hated, and ill-treated, and persecuted her. Oh, I shudder at his very name! I dread to think poor Julian must ever know it. I would give anything if I could spare him the misery of knowing what his father was. Such cruelty it was that killed Helena—it was that that drove her about the world trying to hide her boy from him. It was that that made her pet and pamper Julian, dreading the

day he might be stolen from her; and it was that that made her make me promise I never would lose sight of him till he was a man. I would watch over him night and day, and keep him from his father. That was my promise. No consideration can possibly induce me to break through it. I know you will not try to do it. I am sure you will help me do my duty, and not try to make it hard to me. Julian must stay at home, as his mother said he must, and I must watch him as I said I would. Here he is almost safe, if anywhere. That man, whom I have to call his father, has been led to think he never came back here; that Helena left him at a school in Germany. He would not look for him here; he would not know him if he saw him, he is so altered; his name is dropped completely, and, besides, bad and daring as the man has always been, he would not dare to come and claim him out of his grandfather's house—out of the refuge his poor mother brought him to when she was flying from his wickedness and cruelty. If he were away at some strange place, there is no knowing what might happen. So you see you must not talk to me about letting him go away; it is impossible. You have often told me not to worry about Julian; now you see I cannot help it. I am very sorry I never told you before. I have often wanted to, but I never could make up my mind. You know now what is my life's work, my life's duty, Dr. Catherwood, to hide Julian from his father, and to make up to him in some way for the misfortune of his birth."

There was a moment's perfect silence; Christine sat looking before her without moving, a flush upon her cheek, and with a resolved, womanly look.

Dr. Catherwood, when at last he turned from the window, looked very pale and stern; even his lips were ashy, and there was a blue line around them as he spoke:

"We will not talk any more about it now," he said, going into the room beyond. "Perhaps it will be best for you to keep

him with you ; you know I cannot judge. I must now go to Harry. Tell your father I was sorry not to see him this morning ; if he needs me he will send me word, I know."

Christine sat silent for several minutes after he had ceased speaking before she realized that he had gone ; then she looked up and started. There was something in his manner, though she had not seen his face, that had made her feel he had been displeased with what she said, and yet she knew she had done right to say it. And there was something more that she was trying to make up her mind to say ; she had looked up with the words upon her lips, when she found that he had gone. This young girl had a very sacred idea of friendship ; she felt that she owed it to Dr. Catherwood, who was her best and truest friend, to tell him all about Helena and the promise she had made to her, and there could be no better time than now. It was not very important, but she should feel better if he knew it all, and he would understand her better, and her position in society. He had spoken to her several times about the world and the men she would meet in it, as she knew he would not have spoken if he had known all. He had told her one day she must not marry any of the silly boys whom Madeline had around her ; and that Mr. Brockhulst even was too young and immature to be a lover fit for her. Such things made her uncomfortable when they came from him, even though he said them carelessly, for she felt that he had a right to know all, and that she was not quite honest in keeping silence about anything that would influence her life so much, even though it gave her the greatest pain to speak of it. He should know all about it, the very first moment that she was alone with him, she resolved ; getting up and going to her father's room with the paper in her hand, pausing to say one thankful prayer for Harry Gilmore as she passed the sunny window of the upper hall that opened on the garden.

CHAPTER XXII.

A DANGER AVERTED.

"Our many deeds, the thoughts that we have thought,
They go out from us thronging every hour;
And in them all is folded up a power
That on the earth doth move them to and fro;
And mighty are the marvels they have wrought,
In hearts we know not, and may never know."
FABER.

Dr. UPHAM did not leave his room for a day or two after this; he wondered a great many times why Catherwood did not come in, and Christine wondered too, though she did not say anything about it. She had met him once or twice at the miller's cottage, where she went a great many times every day, and he had been very kind, though always in a hurry, and she had not had the courage to ask him why he did not come; it was a thing so openly absurd to ask him to come to the Parsonage, which was exactly like his home to him. He had said the last time as he went out of Harry's room, "I'm sorry Dr. Upham isn't better; if he needs me, I know he will send me word."

There was a good deal of sickness in the neighborhood, it is true; the Doctor's two horses were getting some hard work; all the babies within ten miles were taking advantage of this bad August weather to cut their teeth and to be very ill; but there had been a month of diphtheria early in the season, and Dr. Catherwood had always found time to be at the Parsonage at least once a day, and to take one meal out of every three at the table there.

So Christine wondered and felt very unhappy, and thought

herself an ingrate when she looked at Harry Gilmore and saw that he was getting well. A few days ago she had thought if Harry got well there would be nothing else to wish for in the world; now he was getting well, and her heart was heavy with a trouble she could not even understand. She tried to relieve her conscience by being very kind and attentive to Harry, taking him nice things from the Parsonage, getting him new books, and knives, and pictures, and sitting by him for hours and reading to him. All these attentions Mrs. Gilmore received in a silent and ungracious manner, and with a gleam of the eye that was even more than ungracious. Christine did not understand it, but it made her very uncomfortable, and going down to the cottage became a dreaded business.

There were occasionally one or two neighbors sitting there, very straight in their chairs, with their best shawls on, and Christine thought they looked at her as if she were one of the Borgias. It was very likely they did, for the village was all aflame on the subject of Julian's crime, but of course nothing came to Christine's ears. And Dr. Upham's temporary illness had kept him from all knowledge of the story, for Christine had not had the courage to tell him of it, nor indeed the heart to worry him with it while he was suffering so much in body. She had followed Dr. Catherwood's advice and had not said anything to Julian, leaving it for him to do, and he had not done it, she was almost sure. Julian had been more than usually restless and unruly. Crescens and he had had many fierce encounters, and Christine with a shudder had heard him answer one of the servants with a rude and mocking laugh who had asked him if he wasn't ashamed of himself to be acting so when Harry Gilmore lay half dead from what he'd done to him. She could only be silent and pray with a very heavy heart.

At last, one evening, the third after these occurrences, when Christine took her father's cup of tea up to him, he said, turn-

ing a little restlessly in his arm-chair: "I do not see why Catherwood does not come; I think I should like to see him. I do not quite understand this pain. Ring for Ann and let her go down for him."

Christine rang for Ann and sent her down to the Doctor's cottage. The Doctor was at home, lying at half length on the cane sofa of the porch, smoking a lazy cigar after the day's work, and listening to the rush of the water over the dam. He did not move when he saw Ann coming down the path, only said: "Well, Ann?" when she paused at the step, and slowly took the cigar out of his mouth.

Ann delivered her message with the peculiar blushiness of pretty servant maids when they have messages to deliver to nice gentlemen, and Dr. Catherwood in return smiled a little and said: "Tell Doctor Upham I will come up presently."

He smoked his cigar quite out, and lay listening to the water for a while after he had thrown it from him, then walked up and down the path several times before he went into the house and rang the bell. Rebekah, a silent, sturdy machine of a housekeeper, brought the lamp, and placed the tea upon the table in the little parlor, and withdrew. He poured out first one cup and then another, and drank them slowly. Rebekah came in and laid the evening paper on the table; he did not unfold it, but at last got up, rang the bell, and left the house.

The fields at evening!—how sweet and thoughtful and calm they were! He crossed them slowly, and went in at the Parsonage gate just as Ann was pulling the hall lamp down to light it. There was no light in the parlor; Dr. Catherwood looked in, and caught sight of Mr. Brockhulst walking up and down, and looking rather disturbed and uncomfortable.

"Oh, good evening," the latter said, stopping as he saw the new-comer. "I was waiting till you came. Miss Upham said perhaps her father had better see you first before I went up-

stairs, but if he is any more unwell, perhaps I had better postpone my business ; to-morrow will do just as well."

There was something in Mr. Brockhulst's manner that said his business was very disagreeable, and he would be very glad to postpone it himself if there were any excuse for doing so, and Dr. Catherwood began immediately to conjecture of what it treated. Could it be Julian ? Mr. Brockhulst had the air of one who acts on the defensive, so Dr. Catherwood said, seating himself :

"I have not seen Dr. Upham for several days. I do not know how much amiss he is. If you want to see him on any parish business, no doubt he can attend to it ; such matters are not apt to trouble him, I think. The Doctor has a very clear head ; I have seen him go through a great deal of hard thinking when he was suffering very acute pain."

"It is nothing in regard to parish business," said Mr. Brockhulst, uncomfortably and with an evasive manner. "But, I think, very possibly, it will be better to put off my interview till morning. I should like to see him before school-time. I will call, I think, a little after eight."

"*Apropos*," said his companion, now quite certain what the business was, "what progress does Julian seem to make ? I have often meant to ask you ; he is a bright boy ; I have noticed him a good deal ; but very difficult to manage, I should apprehend."

"It is of him I am come to speak to Dr. Upham," he said, with a sudden change of plan. "Dr. Catherwood, I am very unpleasantly fixed about that boy."

"Ah !" said the Doctor, with mild interest.

"The fact is," said the young minister, sitting down beside him, and speaking in a tone of resolution ; "the fact is, Dr. Catherwood, I have determined that that boy shall be taken away from the school. I am willing his grandfather should put it in any shape he pleases. I do not want to make unpleasant feel-

ing, but I will not be troubled with him any longer. I might as well give up my school at once."

"That is unfortunate," said Dr. Catherwood; "as you say, it puts you in a very unpleasant position; you being, as it were, merely an assistant to the Rector, and he having planned the school and being so long a teacher of one himself."

"As to that," returned the younger man, with a touch of asperity in his tone, "there may be many ways of looking at it."

"And," continued Dr. Catherwood, without noticing the interruption, "I can understand how you feel about the impolicy of offending any of the Doctor's friends among the vestry, such things are always so much magnified. I am afraid there would be a great clamor made. But if it is necessary—if the boy has done anything that cannot be overlooked, of course such considerations fall to the ground entirely. You must sacrifice your own interests to the interests of the school."

"I cannot think Dr. Upham would be unreasonable," said the other, "if I explained all to him; I feel certain he will remove the boy without making any noise about it."

"It may be so," returned Dr. Catherwood; but, lowering his voice, "I will say to you what has come to my knowledge, use it as you please; Julian is to be educated at home. It is not intended to send him away till he is of age; so that if he can no longer be under your tuition he will probably have a master in the house. This, of course, would draw a good deal of attention to the change; and as Dr. Upham was instrumental in procuring scholars for you and furthering your plans, there would be a good deal said about the fact of his grandson's being sent away as soon as the class was well established."

"I cannot help that," he said, resolutely. "Dr. Upham will be certain to agree with me when he knows all I have had to undergo."

"Oh, of course, if there is anything flagrant, anything that cannot be overlooked, as I said, your excuse would be accepted

by those concerned, whatever the world may say. Julian is a trying boy. I have no doubt but I think he may be managed, if things are started right. He is wilful, you see, and turbulent, but I have never seen the boy yet who was not to be led by a judicious flattery. Besides, one is apt to overrate such faults as his; now, for instance, about this little affair with Harry Gilmore ——”

“Yes, about that,” said the clergyman, in a tone of suppressed excitement. “It would be difficult to overrate that, I think.”

“On the contrary,” said Dr. Catherwood, with firmness, “it would be difficult to place it at its real value, having had such unfortunate results. But there are not two boys wrestling in your playground at recess every day, who do not commit as serious a fault, only there is no precipice over which one may push the other; and the lucky boy who manages to keep uppermost gets nothing but a lecture from his mother for his damaged pantaloons. Consequences are not always true corollaries. Motives, I think, are admitted to have a certain weight, if not in law, at least in morals. A boy of twelve has a right to all the doubt that can exist in his judge’s mind; and if his judge has been a boy himself within ten or twenty years, he will not find it difficult to excuse the hasty blow, the animal instinct of defence, the brute delight in strength, the blind and uncalculating triumph. Harry Gilmore is as much to blame as Julian Upham; if you expel one, you must expel both. And if you expel both, Mr. Brockhulst, you send two boys out into the world with a brand upon them that they never can outgrow. I have watched those two; I know how nice a hand they need; and I trust you will forgive me if I say, in all the heavy charge that lies upon you, there is no heavier and no holier than the charge of them. Two men, honoring or dishonoring their manhood, will look back to this time, perhaps through life, and bless or curse you for the bias that you gave them.”

There was a moment’s silence, broken by the sound of a foot

upon the piazza, and a flutter of white muslin at the parlor door.

"Ah, Miss Clybourne!" said Dr. Catherwood, rising and meeting her, while Mr. Brockhulst started and bowed stiffly.

"Why, what a darkness," said Madeline, coming in with a little hesitation. "Is Christine lost anywhere in it? or are you two gentlemen here alone?"

"We two gentlemen are here alone," returned Dr. Catherwood, with a smile.

"A pair of owls in the belfry could not be dimmer; I hope you bring the dawn under your wings. Ah, and there comes Miss Christine!"

Christine came in, and Dr. Catherwood, after a few words to her, excused himself, and went up-stairs, and left the clergyman with the young ladies.

In five minutes also the clergyman excused himself and went away, and Madeline, coloring angrily at his departure, sat down beside the window and begged Christine to countermand the order for the lamp. Christine was very willing, and the two sat in the darkness by the window, looking out into the dark and silent garden.

Madeline was very impatient and very much out of humor with everybody, and Christine was very *triste* and quiet.

"Do you suppose Dr. Catherwood means to spend the evening in your father's room?" said Madeline, at last. "For if he doesn't come down soon and talk to me I shall go away. You are too dull to be endured, Christine. I came to be amused; I have had the gloomiest three days! Wait till you have to stay at the Hill and take care of Mrs. Sherman through a headache, and you will know what *ennui* is. I should not have stayed an hour if mamma had not made me: *entre nous*, Christine, Mrs. Sherman is a selfish old affair, and only cares for us because we make her some amusement. I hope it may please Heaven to remove me before I am forty-five, if my latter

end must be like hers. Why, Christine, she's an old hypocrite; her character all comes to pieces like her body, and I warn you to keep away from her dressing-room and sick-bed, if you want to preserve your reverence for her."

"Hush," said Christine, simply.

"No, I will not. Why should I? Don't you suppose she would say I was a bad-tempered girl if anybody asked her? She will not think there is any necessity for being honorable after she has got all she wants out of me. I've eaten of her salt to be sure, but I only ate it while I was paying her well for it. You think it is necessary to be so grateful? Do you suppose all she does is for us? No; it is for herself. We have youth and spirits, and she can't buy them with all her money. We amuse her and make people like her house, and she can't spare us. She is useful to us and gives us pleasure, and we're useful to her and give her pleasure. We are square. I do not afflict myself."

"I do not ask you to afflict yourself, but I cannot face such things as those. I do not believe I am more easily deceived than you, but I am willing to try not to see what makes me despise myself and other people."

"No; I really believe you are not a simpleton, Christine, though you have much the air of being one. Sometimes I think you are a hypocrite, which is rather better on the whole, though not quite what I should like to see my daughter, if I had one, as Mrs. Sherman would say. What a blessed Providence that she hasn't one! I think she has a mind to adopt you, Christine; she found I was too many for her the second time she saw me, but she praises you *ad nauseam*. Oh, to hear her talk to Colonel Steele about you. The old intriguer. I believe she thinks it's next best to having a lover herself, to secure one for somebody she has in tow. The ruling passion is strong yet. And the Colonel, I firmly think, believes he is certain of you, and your nice little property,

Christine, don't forget that, if you please. You are very pretty and sweet, and if I were a man I think I should lie tangled in that auburn hair of yours. I do not know any eyes that would please me half as well, but I've heard, men liked pretty fortunes as well as pretty faces. And when they come together! Oh happy Colonel Steele! He thinks his cup of happiness is full. He is coming to the Hill on Saturday, and you are to be invited there to stay over Sunday. See if you are not. I heard the whole arrangement when he went away. Mrs. Sherman thinks I am such a fool; she flatters me about him and pretends she thinks he likes me. Well, I believe he does, only not quite as well as he does you. He might, perhaps, if I had eighty thousand dollars. But I haven't, dear. I have got to marry it, instead of its marrying me. So you see it's a question of trade any way; you are to be bought or you are to buy. Oh, pretty, pleasant, happy barter! For my part, Christine, I am disillusionized. I think that a woman's life is horridly flat, degrading."

"I think that you are out of humor," said Christine, simply.

Madeline gave an impatient toss to the branch of honeysuckle that she was holding in her hand; it fell out on the dark grass-plot below the window, and then Madeline leaned forward and looked after it.

"Yes, I believe I am," she said, with a half sigh. "I ought to believe it, for I am told so every hour at home by some one. There is a horrid picture of a shrew in an old spelling-book of Raymond's. It would not surprise me in the least if I grew to look exactly like it. I feel the likeness creeping into my face every day. I went to the glass only this morning to see how far it had gone." Christine laughed a little. "I want to ask you something," Madeline said, turning to her abruptly. "Don't you think a woman is a fool who submits herself and her fancies to the direction of a man

who is not yet her lover? He has no right to say what she shall do and what she shall not. It is no concern of his whether she dances or sits still, whether she wears pretty clothes or makes herself a fright. And has she not a right to resent it, if he shows by his manner disapproval and resentment?"

"Why, I cannot tell exactly," said Christine. "If she cares for him she will try to please him, and if he cares for her, he will expect it of her."

"But it is presuming in him to expect anything of her till he declares himself her suitor," said Madeline, with hauteur.

"But I was imagining that she loved him," said the other, "and then she could not help trying to suit his fancy; she would naturally give up what he did not like, without thinking anything at all about it."

"Oh, you tiresome, tiresome innocent!" cried Madeline, with impatience. "What a wife you'll make! Dear limp, abject creature! Happy Colonel! It is a shame only one man can marry you; you are so exactly the ideal wife, you could constitute the happiness of three or four. There comes Dr. Catherwood. I mean to ask him if he does not think you the perfect woman nobly planned. Dr. Catherwood!"

Dr. Catherwood was passing through the hall; he did not look into the parlor, and it is quite possible that he did not mean to do it; but Madeline's gay voice obliged him to turn towards it, and he entered with his usual pleasant smile.

Christine had only time to say, "I do not like this, Madeline," in a tone quite the reverse of limp and abject, before Dr. Catherwood was seated beside them, and Madeline, roused, animated, and coquettish, was repeating to him the questions that she threatened. Was not Christine the perfect woman nobly planned? Was she not his, every man's ideal wife? Could a man desire anything more submissive, enduring, faithful, tender, and true? Was a wife to be thought of who had any will?

Was anything so lovely as a woman without prejudices—without temper—without enthusiasm—and wasn't Colonel Steele the happiest of men?

Fortunately for all, Madeline asked so many questions that no one man could answer them at once, and Dr. Catherwood was cool enough to make a choice.

"About this Colonel Steele," he said, with a smile, looking into Christine's face, "I have been meaning to ask something about him. It seems to me he comes very often to the Hill; which of the two young ladies lays a claim to his devotion?"

"Oh, Christine, *sans doute*. Christine is the happy victor, though she does not acknowledge openly the fact. As for me, I am not ashamed to acknowledge conquests when I make them; I wear all my scalps; I hope to have dozens at my belt; but the ideal woman doesn't; the ideal woman never wants but one."

"Then, Miss Christine is not the ideal woman; I know she has ambition; I know she is glad to think she has brought the young minister to her feet, as well as the military gentleman; and if you knew all that I know, Miss Clybourne, you would feel sorry for the parson, if you do not feel sorry for the Colonel. One of them will be a very miserable man."

"Oh, as to that," cried Madeline, with a tinge of pique in her voice, which Dr. Catherwood was happy to observe, "as to that, I do not believe it will be fatal in one case or the other. The Colonel is too old to take the disease in its severest form, and as to the clergyman, I think it will be very light; he has had it once already, and any attack coming now would be merely sympathetic."

"Thank you," said Christine, a little angrily.

"The Colonel is a marrying man, they say," went on Dr. Catherwood, gravely.

"Oh, yes," said Madeline, tartly, "that is well understood."

"It must be that that makes me like him so," said Christine,

getting up and going towards the table. "He is so much pleasanter than Mr. Leslie and the striplings who come sometimes to the Hill. Ann, you may bring the lamp in now."

There was something about Christine that was exasperating to Madeline's saucy nature—a something that was growing, too. She evidently had had enough of the Steele question, and meant to table it. Dr. Catherwood had never seen her so much the woman as to-night.

"Well," cried Madeline, "that means I am to go, for I expressly asked that the lamp should not be brought in till I went away. Dr. Catherwood, will you see if the maid is waiting for me?"

"The maid is, Miss Clybourne, but do I not outrank her! Let me take you home."

Christine watched them go away together; then, going back into the parlor, turned down the lamp, and sat alone a long while in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MOMENT OF TEMPTATION.

"The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast,
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed."

LONGFELLOW.

"THEN I may come at five?" said Colonel Steele, rising and taking his straw hat from among the books and flowers upon the table in the Parsonage parlor.

It was Saturday, and the Colonel had come up in the morning train; but Mrs. Sherman had to communicate to him the tidings that Christine was not coming to spend Sunday at the Hill. She did not wish to leave her father, though Mrs. Sherman feared that was merely an excuse, as the Rector now left his room and seemed as well as usual.

"She has taken alarm at something, she is such a shy creature," said Mrs. Sherman. "But that does not discourage me; it only shows me she has feeling and is not indifferent."

The Colonel bit his lip; he was not inspired with the same confidence. He assented, however, to Mrs. Sherman's plan for the afternoon, and went down to the Parsonage to tell Christine they were coming for her to ride at five o'clock.

"Very well," said Christine, for there was nothing else to say besides, she was extremely fond of riding, and never felt quite so happy as when on a horse's back. She had no horse of her own; Julian had fallen heir to her pony, and though the Rector had several times spoken of looking out for a saddle-horse

for her, it never had been done, and one of the many favors that were in Mrs. Sherman's gift was the use of a pretty bay, who trotted, and paced, and cantered *à merveille*, and seemed by nature designed for a lady's use. Madeline generally rode a black horse of the Judge's, a wild, high-spirited animal no woman ever should have mounted. Mr. Leslie took his chance among the farm and carriage-horses, while Colonel Steele brought his own horse with him, as became a Colonel of cavalry and a gentleman of expensive tastes and habits.

"Father," said Christine, that afternoon, opening the study door a little way, "if Julian does not come in at six, will you remind Crescens to go for him? He was only to stay two hours at the brook. I shall not be back till seven or eight, I fear. I am going to ride, you know."

"Ah, with whom, my dear?" said the Rector, pushing back his chair and holding out his hand. Christine came in, holding up her habit, and tripping a little among its folds, as she went across the room.

Dr. Catherwood was sitting by her father, and smiled her a pleasant welcome. She had not seen him since the evening of Wednesday, when he went home with Madeline.

"With whom are you going?" repeated her father, looking affectionately and proudly at her as she stood beside his chair.

"With Madeline and the gentleman from the Hill," said Christine, coloring. "I told you all about it at the dinner-table, father."

"Ah, yes, I forgot," he returned; "but does not Mrs. Sherman go with you? I should like it better."

"Oh, yes; Mrs. Sherman goes in the carriage. I did not fancy you would have any aversion to my going, but if you have——"

"No, no, my child, I can trust you. I am afraid you can guide yourself better than I can guide you. Good-bye." He sighed as she stooped to kiss him, and with a smile to Dr. Catherwood went out of the room.

"Catherwood," said the Rector, uneasily, after the door had closed, "that child is a dreadful burden to me; I do not know what to do for her."

Dr. Catherwood smiled. "Why do anything for her, my dear sir? You struck a mine of truth when you said she could guide herself. I never saw a woman, young or old, better fitted to sustain herself; she has wonderful strength, young as she is. I know she is entirely to be trusted."

"Yes, thank God," said the father, reverently; "she is true and pure. But the world is strong and cunning—strong and cruel; and she is but a child. Catherwood," and he turned his eyes upon his companion earnestly, "I wish I could give her to a good man before I die. I am old; time is going fast. Every year I feel, before the next comes round, she and the boy may be alone, without a relative, a friend on earth to look to. I have no ambition for her; she has more money, poor child, than she needs. I want to give her to a true and honorable gentleman, one who will love her and satisfy her heart; who will protect her and shield the boy, and take my place towards them both—more than take my place, perhaps; a younger man would be better for them, would know better how to guard them. I am old and worn out. I long to go; this only holds me back. Christine is a good child, Catherwood; she would make any man that loves her happy. She surprises me every day with something fine and sensible; her mind is growing fast. I do not know where a man would look to find a better wife; she is so young she would take any one I chose for her, and love him I am sure. I do not ask anything for her but affection and protection; this world's favors I do not seek for mine; I look only for a man upon whose honor and integrity I can rely; a man, Catherwood, whose heart I have read, upon whose age and judgment I feel I can rely, and whose life I know to have been pure."

There was a pause; the Rector looked earnestly and wist-

fully into his companion's face; there was no misinterpreting what was so simple-minded and unworldly; the appeal came straight from the father's troubled heart; he trusted his friend to the utmost limit that one friend can trust another.

Dr. Catherwood sat looking steadfastly before him, his eyes fixed upon the floor. Christine had been offered to him—Christine, with her youth, her loveliness, her wealth—in her fair, dawning womanhood, with her loyal and earnest affection, with her true, untainted heart, of which he was perhaps already master. There was a future to cover and obliterate any hateful past; a future that, coming so late in the life of any man, might well astound him with its rich and luxuriant promise.

There was a silence of many moments; the Rector did not take his eyes from off his companion's face, but he could read nothing on it. Its perfect repose and kindliness he could not fancy covered a black storm of rebellion and temptation; and in his voice, when he raised his eyes and spoke, he did not detect the faintest tremble of emotion.

"I do not know," he said, "whether I am quite right in saying what I do, since it is nothing but conjecture; but I have always taken so much interest in your daughter, that I have observed the impression made upon her by those with whom she has been thrown; and also the impression she has made upon the minds of the men whom she has met. She is universally admired; but among her admirers there is one who perhaps promises as much as any you can hope to find. He is a man of good intellect and acquirements, kind-hearted, I think, and well calculated to render happy any woman who was disposed to love him. Colonel Steele is not a personal friend of mine; he is a travelling acquaintance and an occasional companion. I do not know a great deal of his life, but I should think it would bear scrutiny. He has lived before the world continually in a very open and well-conducted manner; and if I understand him, is a man to whom a father need not fear to

trust a daughter, *provided always* he was the daughter's choice. I am certain you never would urge upon your child a marriage to which her heart was disinclined. I understand and honor your feelings, Dr. Upham, more than I can tell you, and I sincerely trust you may see the consummation of your best hopes for your daughter's happiness. She is fast ripening into a womanhood of the noblest type; and the man who has the happiness to win her love, and the right to ask her hand, may thank Heaven for its generosity."

Dr. Upham sighed heavily as he rose, and paced up and down the room. "We seldom get our wishes, Catherwood," he said; "but I am willing she should be happy in Heaven's way, if I cannot see her happy in mine. Do you think she likes this man? I had hardly noticed him. I never dreamed——"

"I cannot say she likes him; perhaps she hardly knows herself as yet."

"I must speak to her; I must know about it," he murmured, as he crossed the floor; "but, Catherwood," he added, after a moment, stopping before him, "I am afraid of the influence of my wishes on her. I cannot trust myself. I want her to choose for herself, since I do not know the man. You had better speak to her about it, find out how she feels, and tell me the result. Do not blame me; I have had such a calamity; I have such cause to dread this step. I cannot trust myself to speak. Find out this thing for me, and bring me word, my friend."

Dr. Catherwood was silent, and then made the promise that he asked, and went out in time to see Mrs. Sherman drive away from the door in her open carriage, with Mr. Brockhulst on the seat beside her, and Madeline, Christine, Mr. Leslie, and Colonel Steele riding on horseback in advance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A ROUGH EXPERIENCE.

"If you break your plaything yourself, dear,
Don't you cry for it all the same?
I don't think it is such a comfort,
One has only one's self to blame."

A. PRACON.

THE afternoon was not what Mrs. Sherman had put down in her programme; it was bright and rather promising when they first started, but about three miles out of town, the horizon began to swell its pile of thunder-heads, small clouds scoured over the heavens, and the sun, though still shining, had an out-of-place, unnatural look, from contrast with the dark below.

Mrs. Sherman began to be uneasy, and to ask Mr. Brockhulst and the coachman if they thought there would be a storm. The coachman thought it would blow over, and Mr. Brockhulst could give no opinion. By-and-by the riding party slackened their pace and waited for the carriage to come up, and asked what was to be done. No one wanted to go home, but all felt a vague apprehension that that was just what should be done; still the coachman said it would blow over, and Madeline said it had looked just so last week and had not rained, and Mr. Leslie was certain they could get back in time if it began to sprinkle; so it was concluded they should ride on another mile, and see how things looked at that time.

They rode on another mile, and then stopped and held another council. The storm had not made any progress certainly; the west was lowering, but the sun was shining; the clouds had not grown in size, and they had been looking at

them so long they could not tell whether they had increased at all in blackness. When people start out on a party of pleasure, it takes an angel with a drawn sword in his hand to turn them back. The very horses, in this case, seemed to scorn the indecision of their riders, and to fret under the restraint of bit and bridle, as they paused in consultation; particularly Madeline's black, whom she found it impossible to hold, and whose restive movements caused her to exclaim, rather impatiently :

"One thing or the other, good people; Guido and I are tired of indecision."

"Let us go," cried Colonel Steele, with animation; "we can find plenty of shelter if it should rain."

"A storm among the mountains would be glorious," said Mr. Leslie; "a thing to be remembered all one's life."

"Well, anything for an adventure," said Mrs. Sherman, yieldingly.

"I trust we shall not be detained beyond eight o'clock," remarked the young minister, rather anxiously.

"It strikes me you are all unwise," said Christine, as she followed her companions.

Their destination was an inn of some celebrity among trout-fishers and sportsmen, situated in a wild spot near the summit of the lowest of the group of mountains which rose gradually from among the hills surrounding —. Mrs. Sherman had sent a servant up in the morning to order tea to be prepared for them, and it was proposed to leave there about nine o'clock, coming home by the light of the harvest moon, now at the full.

Two members of the party were sailing under sealed orders — Mr. Brockhulst and Christine. It was feared that the latter was too shy a fish to rise to any bait so palpable and strong as an excursion of such length and with Colonel Steele for her companion, and she was only asked indefinitely to join a riding party. Mr. Brockhulst, also, Mrs. Sherman knew, would never

be caught in such a worldly company at such an hour on the night of Saturday ; so she used a little of the serpent's wisdom, and sending the cavalcade ahead, called herself at the cottage where he had his rooms, and sent the servant up with a message to him—a message so worded that it conveyed to his mind the idea his benefactress was waiting for him at the door, to know if he would spend a half hour with her in the carriage, if he possibly could spare the time, to talk over something in connection with the parish, while she gave him a little airing and secured an uninterrupted conference.

With a weary sigh he pushed aside his uncompleted sermon, closed half-a-dozen books of reference lying by him on the table, and prepared himself to obey the unwelcome summons. Reckless as he was in the use of himself, he had an impression that he was not wise in sitting up till two o'clock on Sunday morning to finish a sermon to be preached that day. There was four hours' work on it yet, and if he went to drive with Mrs. Sherman it could not be touched till ten, for at seven came tea, at eight came a class of youths to be prepared for Confirmation, and at ten would come the resumption of the sermon—a sermon written at the request of his vestry, and promised for that occasion. He had walked at least eight miles in the morning, visiting some distant parishioners, and had no need whatever of the air—in fact, needed rest much more—for Saturday was a terrible day with him, all the parish work of the week being crowded into it on account of the holiday he gave his class of boys.

But Mrs. Sherman's wishes could not be disregarded ; no doubt she had something of importance to say to him, and it showed a very unchastened spirit to rebel so much against the interruption.

He looked very pale and languid as he took his place beside her in the carriage, and his forced, patient smile really was very touching.

"You are working too hard, my dear young friend," said his benefactress, with a most interested air. "Do not let me hear of any more eight-mile walks while you are so weak. Why did you not send to the Hill? You know there is always a horse there for you. And this matter of the Confirmation Class three evenings in the week—I implore you to discontinue it. I shall take every pains to interrupt and interfere with it. You need relaxation and amusement; you are in my hands for this afternoon, and I shall see that you do not escape me."

Mr. Brockhulst looked alarmed, as well he might.

As they drove up to the Parsonage, they caught sight of Madeline pacing her horse up and down under the trees, while Colonel Steele was opening the gate for Christine, who was just coming out. Mr. Brockhulst changed color.

"Are you ready for your ride, *mes amis*? We will go on together. It will be very pleasant," said Mrs. Sherman, artlessly, and as if she thought the meeting quite a charming little coincidence.

Madeline looked the embodiment of good style on horseback; she wore a black cloth habit and a high beaver hat; her whole costume was as masculine, rigid, and modish as was possible. She looked extremely handsome, too, and her figure showed to the best advantage; all women thought she had attained the happiest point, but the male eye turned with more admiration towards the pretty girlish figure of Christine. Her habit was navy blue cloth, and her hat a straw, bound with blue velvet to match, with a long drooping blue feather.

Colonel Steele, as he put her on the horse and adjusted her small foot in the stirrup, wished he had Dr. Catherwood at ten paces, with a Colt's revolver and a just cause of provocation.

After the second council of war and the second resolution to proceed, they began the ascent of the mountain, and the equestrians got a good deal in advance of the carriage, which was an unsuitably heavy one for such a road. Mrs. Sherman

tried to make herself very agreeable to her companion, who could not succeed in making himself anything but absent-minded and uneasy. Mrs. Sherman looked a good deal at the sky, and Mr. Brockhult looked a good deal in a furtive manner at his watch. There was a growing conviction in the mind of the one that there was a storm coming up, and in that of the other that the Confirmation Class would go by the board that night.

A half hour passed; the ascent of the mountain was necessarily a very slow one; the road was always a bad one, and two or three hard rains during the week had gullied and injured it very much. For a long distance the trees on either side were so thick the sky was scarcely to be seen, and the increasing darkness was to be accounted for by that circumstance. But in about half an hour they emerged from the woods upon an open plateau, from whence they looked down upon the distant town and its surrounding hills, and out upon the thunder-clouded west. Above them, on the other side, rose precipitous and overhanging rocks; the air was hot and still, with an occasional shivering current of chill running through it. There was "a going in the tops of the trees," and then a hush; a twitter of some frightened bird, and then a cowering down in silence. All nature seemed appalled and apprehensive, hanging on the breath of that fearful mass of tempest that lay black and sullen in the west.

The clouds had swollen and grown almost over the whole heaven; the sun was quite obscured, but colored the clouds before it with a reddish lurid light that made them a feature of terror in the landscape. And at intervals there went through the black bank of cloud a swift, thin thread of flame, that seemed to leave them infinitely blacker and more dense.

Mrs. Sherman with difficulty suppressed a scream as they came out of the cover of the gloomy woods upon this broad and threatening expanse of sky. A few rods before them

halted the riding-party, who had only reached the spot that moment, owing to a long delay occasioned by the turning of Christine's saddle and the loss of Madeline's whip. They all looked pretty grave, excepting Madeline, who called out laughingly to Mrs. Sherman that they had a prospect of the adventure she desired. Colonel Steele, riding quickly up to the carriage, asked the coachman how far to the inn it was, and whether there was any shelter by the way. Mrs. Sherman was by this time in a very hysterical state, and was calling upon all her gods to get her safely out of this. The coachman, in rather a dazed state, was trying to remember how many miles it was to the inn, but could not. Only he was certain of this, they were more than half way up the mountain, and the only thing was to go straight ahead.

"Then drive on, at the best rate you can," said Colonel Steele, with authority, springing from his horse to assist Mr. Brockhulst in putting up the top and fastening down the apron of the carriage. "The young ladies had better get in here."

"No, indeed," cried Madeline; "if we ride fast we can get to the inn half an hour before the carriage. I shall not dismount."

"Then, Miss Upham, you must let me take you down. Mr. Brockhulst, will you ride Miss Upham's horse and give up your place to her?"

"No," said Christine.

"Christine, I command it," cried Mrs. Sherman, in an ecstasy of excitement, and Colonel Steele waited for no further permission, but lifted her from the horse and put her in the carriage.

Mr. Brockhulst, who fortunately was a very good horseman, mounted the bay mare and rode forward, joined in a moment by Colonel Steele; Madeline and Mr. Leslie leading the advance. The carriage soon was lost to sight.

"I must keep back a little," said Colonel Steele, looking

down the road anxiously. "Mr. Brockhulst, you had better ride on, keeping an eye upon Miss Clybourne. She may need both you and Leslie before the ride is over. That black brute has the very devil in his eye to-day."

Mr. Brockhulst needed no further hint; he was within two rods of the young horsewoman before Colonel Steele had fairly turned his horse around. The road, now descending slightly through a rocky and damp ravine, was too narrow for him to ride beside her; but she turned her head and caught sight of his anxious face with a peculiar satisfaction.

Presently the great, slow drops of rain began to patter down upon the leaves above them with a dull, deliberate regularity; then a strong swaying of the branches suddenly commenced; then came a sharp glaring blaze of lightning, and then a peal of thunder that burst with deafening echoes among the ledges overhead. Madeline was a girl of good spirit and most unusual courage, but she could not quite repress a little scream, and she raised her right hand to her eyes as if to rub out that horrid gleam. The little movement gave Guido the advantage; he took the bit between the teeth and made a plunge.

"Check him, check him, Miss Clybourne! Don't let him have his head," cries Mr. Leslie, like a fool, for who was going to let him have his head if it could be helped?

Madeline uttered some impatient advice to him to keep quiet, and grasping the reins firmly, shook Guido's stubborn head about until he came to terms—that is, until he consented to go up an opposing hill at a hand-gallop instead of on a mad run. It was only a temporary subjugation, though, she and her companion knew. Half her strength was gone before she was up the hill, and she saw with a sinking of the heart the rough precipitous way that succeeded it before the next winding of the road brought them again on the ascent.

She was not frightened; she knew perfectly well what she

was about; she could have managed six wild horses at once if she had only had the strength. He would never master me if I were not a woman and so weak, she thought; and the vexatious idea lent her another spasm of power, and she fairly brought him under for the moment. The road was too narrow for the three to go abreast; so as Madeline slackened up, Mr Leslie trotted briskly along beside her, and Mr. Brockhulst fell into place behind them, holding the amiable bay in his hand and never taking his eyes off Madeline.

The rain was now falling fast; the blackness was less intense, but the rain was blinding, and the wind, now roaring loudly in the trees, made all the horses restless and prone to start, while the uncertainty of their footing increased every moment. Before they had gone fifty rods further, the road was one broad stream; a thousand little rills were pouring into it from the rocks above; there seemed a deluge; the air was full of the sound of water.

The path grew rougher and wilder; it gave Madeline a momentary sense of giddiness as she caught a glimpse, by aid of the flashes that were now dancing round them thicker and faster, of the road they were approaching, winding around the mountain on the edge of a precipice that seemed to go down, down, without a curve, to the forest-tops below them. This crazy road, over which it was rather an adventure to ride at any time, was as much out of repair as it is often the lot of a road to be. There were not half-a-dozen travellers a day passing over it, and they rarely were equestrians; generally sportsmen with gun and bag or creel and pole, and the occasional lumbering cart and sure-footed beast sent down from the little inn for the few supplies the two families needed who lived upon the mountain. There were rough bridges, occasionally mended by a log, oftener left gaping from freshet-time to freshet-time, and there were gullies down the mountain side that sometimes thook the nerves of even the sure-footed nag who had never been used to any better or smoother manner of highway. Mrs.

Sherman, in her thirst for an adventure, had taken the word of some enthusiastic fisherman who had gone up on foot, and was entirely unprepared for what she found herself surrounded by, and Colonel Steele and Mr. Brockhulst were perfectly aghast. Mr. Leslie, of course, was frightened; but it did not take much to frighten him.

Madeline held her lips very tightly pressed together, and did not open them when her companion made some feeble and spasmodic attempts to make her speak. She was thinking: "Will my head reel when I reach that giddy bit of road? Have I the strength and nerve to last me till we pass it, or are they to fail me at that moment? Has the time come?"

They were rapidly approaching the dreaded place; Madeline held herself firm and erect upon her horse; she grasped the bridle till her fingers felt like stone. Mr. Brockhulst, with a face as pale as ashes, rode close behind her and never took his eyes away from her; Mr. Leslie kept his place with difficulty beside her, for Guido's moderation was his horse's extreme of speed.

Just as they neared the spot, only separated from it by a rude, uncertain bridge, and just as Madeline was feeling she would come out victorious, there flamed across the heaven such a piercing, blinding light, and such a frightful crash of thunder burst over their very heads, shattering and shivering the air, and stunning the senses like a blow, that all three horses sprang wildly forward; Guido cleared the bridge at a bound, made a misstep, regained his footing, and sped wildly on, while Mr. Leslie's steed stumbled and fell utterly, a helpless heap of horse-flesh.

Alas! for Madeline. If her fingers had been of bronze laced in and out of those iron strips of reins, if her strength had been "the strength of ten," it would have availed but little. To the viciousness and stubbornness of the brute's nature was added sudden and frantic terror; he was blinded by his

light and fury. The whole violence of the storm seemed hurled upon them at this point, exposed and open, round which the wind swept fiercely, and against which the rain fell in strong and heavy sheets. The horse saw nothing, regarded nothing; he was running madly upon destruction.

He flew forward, straight as an arrow shot from a steel cross-bow; the road, ten rods further on, took a sharp curve round the mountain side. Below lay the rocky precipice, the gloomy gorge—the tree-tops far, far down below.

Madeline still sat firm, erect, holding those binding strips of iron in her powerless hands, seeing little more than the blinded horse beneath her saw—feeling cold, and dumb, and stolid. “One minute more,” she was saying to herself; “one minute more—how will it feel—how long will it last—how shall I know——”

Over and over the words ran through her mind; she knew the truth, the awful danger, but the knowledge of it had come too suddenly, too vividly, and had stunned her.

All this Mr. Brockhulst saw with feelings that no words can convey. There was but one thing to be done, one move possible to save this fearful game—to reach the outer edge of the precipice first; to get the outside track and press Guido in; to turn him, if only a hair's breadth inward; to break, in even a faint degree, his headlong course; and, if possible, to keep beside him till the danger passed. It seemed an even throw; perhaps Flite was not steady enough to do the work required of her; perhaps nothing could turn and startle Guido now. But there was a chance. He cheered his willing, obedient horse to one strong effort; bounded to her side—there was still room for him; one instant more, he was a hair's breadth in advance; another, Flite's hoof had struck the precipice—she shuddered, faltered, and regained her footing. Guido rushed by her, struck against her, sprang violently back, inward from the edge, and then dashed on.

But the work was done. Still the young rider sat erect and firm, and beside her, now white and trembling and unnerved, her companion rode. The road beyond rose straight before them up the mountain side, and along it flew the two horses, across tumbling streams, deep gullies, broken bridges, through the storm and darkness; on, on, as people ride in dreams of terror.

At last there came a widening of the road, an open field some fences, and through the lulling storm presently they heard the bark of dogs, the tinkle of cow-bells, and by-and-by a human voice. And the road brought up abruptly at the very door of a low, rough, wooden building which stood directly across it, from the windows of which a light was shining, and on the piazza of which three or four men sat smoking, who sprang up in alarm at the wild apparition. Guido found insurmountable objections presenting to his further progress, and stopped short with a start and shudder. One man sprang to his bridle, another hastened to dismount Madeline.

But her fingers were so laced in and out of the reins she hardly could unwind them; her gloves were torn in strips and stained with blood, the only evidence of the good fight she had made.

"You have had a hard ride of it," said the man, disentangling her wet habit from the pommel and lifting her to the ground. She caught at a post of the little piazza to keep herself from falling, overcome by a sudden sense of giddiness, but recovered herself instantly, answered carelessly, and walked into the house.

There was a perfect tempest of agitation in her heart, but she made a stubborn resolution to keep it all down out of sight. She had seen Mr. Brockhulst come up a minute after her and dismount, and now she had a perverse fear that he would come to her and say something about the awful danger they had passed through, and the undeserved mercy that had kept them

still in life. She would do anything rather than let him say that; she shuddered to think of what had passed; she was frightened at her own wickedness, but she found herself more impatient than penitent, and she felt that any one who advised her to be grateful would do it at his peril. She was blaming herself unnecessarily, her nerves were so shaken, her brain so overwrought, she would have been made of iron if she had retained control of them. Some women would have cried and fainted; others would have been frozen into apathy and silence. But all Madeline's strong nature was thrilling, and clanging, and jarring with the intensity of its reaction, and she felt like defying whatever came across her path.

The women of the house collected about her with many questions, condolences, and offers of assistance.

Yes, they had been caught in a terrible storm.

No, she did not want anything till the rest of the party came.

Yes, they might dry her boots if they pleased.

No, she did not care to go to the fire.

She would be much obliged if she could be left quietly alone.

So the women went away, considerably in awe of the grand young lady who preferred sitting alone there in her dripping habit, to coming into the kitchen and being warmed and dried.

By-and-by Mr. Brockhulst came in looking very pale, and found her walking restlessly about the room, snapping her riding-whip through her fingers. She turned abruptly as he entered, and looking at him over her shoulder said, with a laugh:

"I told them we should get here first."

Mr. Brockhulst did not answer, but simply walked across the room and stood looking from the window down the road, growing dimmer every moment with the passing storm and coming light. Presently he said, turning:

"You would do well, Miss Clybourne, to go to the fire and have your clothes dried, I should think."

"I'd rather wait till the others come," she said, carelessly. "All the damage is done to my habit that can be done. And my poor hat, that I fondly hoped to look so fine in at the Park this autumn! Well, it's a lesson to me not to wear my silver-mounted harness when I go on such crazy country expeditions. I wonder how Christine and her 'navy blue' are coming out of the adventure?"

At this moment the landlord, a good-natured, thick-set, sharp-witted countryman, presented himself at the door, and with a hand on each post, stood looking in in silence for a while; then nodded his head and said:

"Young woman, as far as I'm capable of judging, you've had a mighty risky ride. I wouldn't have given half a dollar for your chances coming round the ledge on that awful wild black brute. If he was my horse, I'd knock him in the head. I wouldn't have a devil such as that around my place. And I look upon your getting here alive as one of the wonders folks say is never going to cease."

Madeline laughed carelessly and said it was rather a surprise to herself, but received all the man's congratulations in such a nonchalant fashion, that he presently shrugged his shoulders and took himself away.

There was another silence, during which Madeline seated herself at a little melodeon in one corner of the room and began to hammer out of its reluctant keys a gay and familiar tune. Her companion, rising and going to the door, stopped with his hand upon the latch.

"You will not consent to change your dress or go in to the fire?" he said, as she paused for a moment.

"Oh, no," she returned. "I am quite comfortable. I'll amuse myself till the others come with playing on this wheezy little melodeon, or looking at the works of art about the room. Have you noticed this one right above me?—'Daniel in the Lion's Den.' Poor Daniel! I wonder if the people pestered

him as much about his miraculous deliverance as they do me! and whether he felt as cross as I do!"

When Madeline was alone, she closed the melodeon impatiently, and did not look again at Daniel, but spent a very miserable and solitary half hour, till she heard the sound of wheels and the voice of Colonel Steele as he hurried up in advance of the carriage.

"Brockhulst, is that you? All safe? Thank Heaven! From Leslie's story I was prepared for anything."

He rode back to the carriage to give the welcome news, and presently the carriage itself was at the door, and Mrs. Sherman was being lifted out of it, a perfect wreck of the style and stateliness that had stepped into it three hours before. Her modish French bonnet seemed to have lost all self-respect, and was a miserable spectacle—flimsy, drooping, shapeless. Her flounces were damp and muddy, the shawls wrapped around her by her companions had a very ludicrous expression, and her hair was entirely out of curl. Madeline met her at the door of the little parlor with a laugh.

"How do you like your adventure so far, Mrs. Sherman?" she cried, while Mrs. Sherman staggered to a chair and only answered by a groan.

By this time the others had all reached the parlor door, and Christine, putting her arm round Madeline, whispered: "I am so thankful you are safe."

Madeline released herself and exclaimed derisively: "Spare me a scene, my love, if you are not anxious for one! I think I had a better ride than you, though the landlord does say Guido is a devil. We had better not let the Judge hear that. He would never let me take him out again."

"I should think not," muttered Colonel Steele, below his breath, while aloud he went on to pay Madeline some compliments upon her horsemanship, in which Mr. Leslie joined as well as his injured condition would permit, and in a few mo-

ments all, even to Mrs. Sherman, cheered by the sight of a wood-fire built up quickly on the hearth, and a comfortable-looking supper in the adjoining room, were laughing and chatting merrily about Madeline's adventure as if, within the hour, she had not stood upon the brink of a destruction as appalling as could be pictured to the imagination.

The young clergyman, unable so quickly to dispel the awful images that had stamped themselves upon his mind, went from the room and out into the dark and chilly night, where the tempest was wailing itself to sleep, and the tempest-wrung forests were shivering still with the recollection of its fury. It seemed a profanity to him to rush from the presence of such danger into so heartless and mocking a gaiety. He felt the distance between him and Madeline growing greater every moment. Her self-will and worldliness alarmed him, her levity chilled his love. He must conquer all feeling for her, or be lost to the life to which he was devoted.

And while Madeline, with crimson cheeks and flashing eyes, stood in the circle round the blazing fire, and roused them all to merry peals of laughter by her wit, outside, under the dark and cloudy sky, there was a resolution taken that changed the color of all her future life.

CHAPTER XXV.

EAVESDROPPING.

—— "Sorrow comes to all ;
Our life is checked with shadows manifold ;
But woman has this more—she may not call
Her sorrow by its name."

JEAN INGELW

THE little inn contained three sleeping-rooms for the accommodation of that infinitesimal portion of the travelling public who ever came upon its hospitality. Two were on the ground-floor, one adjoining the dining-room, or what in winter did duty for a kitchen ; the other, a very small one, opening out of the little parlor. To this last Christine was consigned, Madeline sharing Mrs. Sherman's, separated from it by the narrow entry. A small, dark chamber overhead was the fate of Mr. Leslie and the clergyman, while Colonel Steele remained in possession of the parlor and a blanket to lie down on by the fire.

Christine's room was very primitive ; its furniture a rag carpet, a wooden chair, and a washstand, a little mirror in a black frame, and a very narrow bed ; the ceiling was so very low and the window was so very tiny, that it would have seemed almost impossible, if the restless wind outside had not pressed in so strongly, to have drawn more than half-a-dozen breaths in it.

She put out the dim little candle and then lay down, very much in earnest about going to sleep. But sleep being one of the few things not attainable by exertion of the will, she lay a

long while most perfectly awake, tired, and excited, and restless. She heard the wind outside and the occasional barking of a dog, and the swaying of some branches against the roof above. Then the window rattled violently in its clumsy casement, and the paper-shade before it shook and flapped, and Christine thought she must get up and go and call Madeline to come and stay with her, and then she was very much ashamed of herself for having such a thought, being a self-controlled and well regulated young woman, and having had to smother midnight terrors without material assistance all her life. Poor little girl! she had had no mother's side to creep to when the storm was against the wall, and "the blast of the terrible ones" roared without; she had learned to lie alone and silent through whole wakeful nights, hardly breathing without pain, hardly moving without fear.

This, therefore, was no new experience to her; and one alleviating circumstance in the night's discomfort, was the gleam of the fire-light under the parlor door, and the occasional movement in the room adjoining that proved its occupant not yet asleep. The party had gone to their rooms early—that is, at about ten o'clock. It was probably between half-past eleven and twelve that Christine raised herself on her elbow and listened breathlessly to a loud barking of all the dogs about the house, a motley-voiced crew. Then a sound of talking outside, and the entrance of some one into the narrow hall. Some wild and desperate character, no doubt; Christine thought it probable he would cut all their throats before morning, but did not see that she could do anything but listen. A man with the voice and step of the landlord opened the parlor door a little way, and began to speak in a deprecating and conciliatory manner to Colonel Steele, who, roused suddenly, had asked rather sternly who was there.

The landlord was on the outside, and spoke in rather a thick, low voice, and Christine could not catch all he said; but she

put together the scraps of his communication and the replies of Colonel Steele, and assured herself that a belated traveller had arrived, for whom there was no possible accommodation but another blanket on the parlor floor. The lofts above were all full, there were three or four more at present lying round the kitchen fire, the ladies had the only two decent rooms he had, and he did not see how he was going to manage it, if the Colonel would not allow the gentleman to share the parlor with him. He could answer for the gentleman's being quiet and civil, and giving him no trouble; he really was very sorry, but he did not see what else could be done.

The Colonel swore a little, as became him, and protested that the thing was utterly impossible; but finally yielded, as he had meant to from the first, and as the landlord and the traveller outside had known he meant to do. It is a little form of protest that is perfectly understood among travellers, and after it was gone through with, the landlord ushered the guest into the room, expressed his thanks to Colonel Steele, and closed the door and went away.

Christine felt a chill of alarm; the partition between them was so thin, the door so slight and poorly fastened, she really felt as if she must go and speak to Madeline; she would rather lie on the floor in their room than stay here.

At that moment she caught the sound of a familiar voice, an exclamation of astonishment, and a short laugh of amusement:

"Steele, upon my soul!"

"Catherwood, of all men in the world!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Where under heavens did you come from?"

Christine could hardly repress a little laugh of pleasure at that moment; she felt so reassured and comfortable, in fact perfectly at home and perfectly protected; she did not mind the howling of the wind outside, nor the gusty rattling of the window;

she felt safe, now that she knew Dr. Catherwood was under the same roof with them. She smoothed out her pillow, and with her pretty hand under her cheek, lay down with a happy smile upon her lips. But they went on talking, and she could not help hearing what they said.

"In the first place," said the Colonel, "how came you here on this wild night at this late hour?"

"Never be surprised at meeting a country physician any where at any time of night," returned the new-comer's voice. "I was sent for this afternoon to see a very ill child at the log-house just beyond, but not returning home for some hours, did not get the message till the storm was quite inaugurated. I took the brunt of it, I assure you, coming up the mountain; and having spent two hours with the boy, who has had a hard fight for life, poor lad, and being thoroughly drenched, and tired, and sleepy, I shall make no apology for accepting your urgent hospitality."

"Well, I'm sorry, Catherwood, I kept you outside so long; really I did not dream I was to have the honor."

"That's all understood. Now, if you please, how came you here, and what separated you from the gay party with whom I saw you last?"

"The separation has not been a very long one; they are all bestowed somewhere in this spacious inn—where, I shudder but to think; Mrs. Sherman never folded her wings so close before, I'm bound."

"You do not tell me," said his companion, in a tone of great surprise, "that Mrs. Sherman left——at five o'clock this afternoon with the intention of coming to this place?"

"I tell you just that thing," returned the Colonel; "and I need not assure you, after this date, I withdraw; I never serve under her again. What do you suppose was the crazy plan To come up here for supper, and go back by moonlight! By moonlight, my good sir; through those forests where moonlight

never yet found itself by any chance, and over those insane bridges that are not safe at midday. The woman hasn't the judgment of a yearling heifer. She has been in a state of hysterics ever since the storm came on, and well she may be, for I never thought those two girls would get up here alive."

"They are safe, you said?" Dr. Catherwood interrupted quickly.

"Safe? Yes, I suppose so; but no thanks to her."

"Christine rode the bay?" he went on, with an ill-concealed interest, as his companion paused.

"Yes, and Miss Clybourne that devil of a Guido. What Mrs. Sherman was thinking of when she allowed her to ride that brute, I cannot tell."

"But Chris——, Miss Upham, had no trouble with the bay?"

"No, none. I put her in the carriage when the storm began, and made Brockhulst ride her horse. Leslie was thrown at a very early date, and when we overhauled him, limping along, with his great booby of a horse by the bridle, he gave us a most dismal story. The last he saw of Miss Clybourne, Guido was on a run, making straight for a precipice, and the bay had lost his footing on the brink of it, with Brockhulst on his back. This made it cheerful for the two ladies in the carriage; but I always make allowance for a story when it comes from Leslie, and after tracking them safely beyond the gully, as they call the precipice, I managed to keep them tolerably quiet till we got up to the house. Miss Upham, that is; Mrs. Sherman acted like a fool; and if it had not been for the younger one's good sense, I don't know what would have become of us. What with keeping a lookout for Brockhulst and his companion, whom I thought we might come upon at any moment, in I don't know what condition, and finding the road for that dolt of a coachman, and making Leslie hold his tongue, and quieting my own horse, who was ready to jump out of his skin at every flash of lightning, and keeping Miss Upham's spirits up, and Mrs. Sher-

man's hysterics down, Catherwood, depend upon it, I had my hands full."

"I can well understand you had," said his companion; "Miss Clybourne must have been in dreadful danger."

"It's enough to make one shudder to think what an escape it was! Brockhulst, as far as I can understand, has done something to be proud of, in turning Guido in and getting the outside track himself, just as they were rounding the curve there above the gully. I don't know twenty men who would have had the nerve and seen the moment when to do it. If it hadn't been for that, by Jove, that girl would have been in eternity in a minute and a half. The sky was as black as ink, except for the occasional lightning, and Guido was on as mad a run as a horse ever tried. When I saw the tracks about the edge of the bank (one horse had been actually over and had struggled up), I was afraid to trust myself to look below; I waited for the next flash of lightning before I saw the tracks ahead, and knew that they had gone safely past it. But this girl has spirit; she never lost her presence of mind, and the men say here, she came in as straight and firm in her seat as if she had been trotting round the Park on a fine afternoon."

"She is an unusually strong character," said the other, in a lighter tone. "How is it, my dear Colonel, is Mrs. Sherman making up a match between her *protégé* and you?"

"No," said the Colonel, shortly. "I admire Miss Clybourne, but I have never desired to marry her; nor supposed I could do so, if I did desire it."

He paused a moment, and then went on rather abruptly:

"Catherwood, I've sometimes thought you and I were of the same mind about the same woman. If that is so, I think we had better have a talk about it, and settle which has the best chance. I do not wish to waste my time."

Every word of this Christine distinctly heard; she could not help hearing; till this sudden moment she had not tried not to

hear, for there seemed nothing but what she might as well hear as not. Now, while she lifted herself on her elbow in amazement and doubt what she ought to do, the rest came, and she listened; there are not many women who would, for those first startled moments, have done otherwise.

Dr. Catherwood was silent, and then said, raising his head and turning it towards the speaker, which brought his words only the more distinctly to Christine: "You have opened the way to a subject on which I am glad to speak to you. You are mistaken in one thing; I shall not interfere with you. You should have known that from what passed between us on the first night of our meeting at the Hill."

"On the contrary," said the other, stiffly, "I only interpreted your desire for secrecy as additional proof of what I feared; and excuse me, but I do not see any reason yet to change my mind."

"We will not enter into that at present," said the other; "a man's past life is not always the pleasantest thing to talk about; only I will thank you now for observing the silence I requested. I have for some time seen where your fancy had alighted. I cannot tell whether Christine returns your interest; that is for you to discover for yourself. But I can tell you one thing that you may be glad to know: her father, who has not long to live, desires nothing so much as to see his daughter safely married. He will not stand at wealth; Christine has that; he only asks for an honorable and honest man, who will be a kind protector to her after he is gone. With him my influence is great. I can further your suit or ruin it. Tell me now, before the old man speaks to me about you, can you make this girl happy if you win her love? You now what I mean, Steele; would she have your heart and your whole life? Men that have wandered round the world as we have, know there are many ways of spending away one's soul, and bringing to a wife only the empty mockery of a heart—

only the dregs of an impure and ill-spent life. I have no right to question you, I know, only as might makes right ; and I tell you, candidly, I can spoil your cause with Dr. Upham. But we have met cordially for many years ; we might have been friends, perhaps, if our meetings had been more frequent. I wish you well ; I am willing to do all I can to promote your honorable purposes ; but then, you must remember, this young girl's happiness is very dear to me. Her father has shown himself my friend ; for her, herself, I have a warm affection ; at their house I have always met the kindest welcome. Let all this be my excuse for asking you what you would otherwise do well to resent indignantly. What have you to give Christina Upham in exchange for her affection, if you win it ?”

There was a moment's pause, and then the other answered : “An affection as warm and sincere as any man at any age can have to offer ; and a life that can be handled on all sides, and that calls for no secrecy in any of its episodes.”

“That is more than I can say, you think,” said Dr. Catherwood, with a short, sarcastic laugh. “Well, sir, you are right ; I cannot say it ; but I do not hold myself any worse man than I cannot. I see from your tone you do not like what I have said. Well, wait, my friend, till you are in my position, and then say whether I have done right or not. I have had to do with a most trusting and amiable old man, and he has asked me to advise him of his daughter's suitors. He has put more into my hands than I care to hold ; but I am the friend of the house, and I will not betray the trust. No man shall approach that child who is not as worthy of her as she is worthy of a man's whole love, whole life, and service. I do well to prepare you, Steele you see. I do not open the guns till I have sent a summons.”

Up to this moment Christine had listened hungrily, absorbedly, without a scruple—she drank in every syllable without breathing, actually without the exercise of thought—the full force of all only came in the pause after these last words ; then

she pressed her hands before her face, and burying it deeply in the pillow, felt she was undone. Besides what she had heard, was the way of having heard it; the shame of having stolen in upon the confidence of these two men; possessed herself of what either of them would have died rather than have had her hear. Her father's appeal to Dr. Catherwood; Dr. Catherwood's anxiety to provide for her; his cool indifference as to what might be her own desires; his assertion that the father had not long to live; the dark allusion to something in his history that could not be revealed—all these were revelations that shook the very earth beneath her.

In whom was she to believe; what was she to lean upon; where to look for counsel now? She had no one to look to, no friend anywhere. He whom she had so trusted, who had so understood and cared for her, to talk so coolly, to approve so readily of her marriage with a man whom he knew so slightly, towards whom he had no friendship, and for whom he must have known she felt nothing but dislike. What did it all mean? Why had he changed so? What had she done to estrange him from her? She remembered now fully all the change. Surely he could not have done this three weeks ago. He had been different with her since that night of Harry's accident—that morning, rather, after it, when she had talked with him of Helena. But no; it was her own heart that had deceived her; friendship did not mean to him what it meant to her, for he talked with this man about it, and while bargaining her away to him, said he had a warm affection for her, and that her happiness was dear to him.

The ache, the agony of that long night! She did not quit know what the agony was; she thought the ache meant only disappointed friendship. She lay still, trying not to hear the low words of the talkers in the room adjoining, turning her eyes away from the gleam of fire-light that came from under the door, and trembling at the sound of the crackling wood that

from time to time one of them piled upon the fire. Would they never let the fire go out; would their low voices never cease! She must not hear; she would not even think of what she had so wickedly become possessed; but she should go mad if this night did not soon end.

At last it ended, to the talkers in the other room at least; the fire went out, the voices ceased; the two men were perfectly silent, and were probably asleep.

But the "fayre morrowe" came at length; fair to all eyes that had not wept themselves blind through the long night of pain.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NO SERVICE AT ST. PHILIP'S.

"Ev'ry spendthrift to passion is debtor to thought."
LUCILLE.

THAT Sunday was a dark day in the calendar of every member of the party who spent the Saturday night preceding at the little shanty of an inn on the ——— mountain. Dr. Catherwood was up and away by daybreak, and Colonel Steele was looking after the horses at a very early hour, while the other two gentlemen, immured in a dark little chamber over the dining-room, close against the roof, did not receive the idea of daylight till their door was opened by the landlord at about eight o'clock.

The truth was, poor Mr. Brockhulst had not found the night's experience any pleasanter than Christine had, and towards morning had fallen into his first sleep—a miserable, harassing one, to be sure, but tenacious of its hold upon its victim, whom it had all night played fast and loose with. When the landlord spoke, he woke with a start, thought himself for several minutes in the hold of a slave-ship, of which he had been dreaming; then looked at his watch and remembered where he was and what the morning was, and almost wished it was the dream, and the slave-ship the reality. Half-past eight o'clock on Sunday morning, and he ten miles away from his post of duty! The early service, the Sunday-school, the Confirmation class—all these were passed, duties neglected, sins for ever on record—to his shame; but the morning service might still be saved. He might reach the church before half-

past ten, and spare himself the remorse that a failure to do so would entail upon him. With that thought in his mind, he had left the little room, before Mr. Leslie had fairly aroused himself in his dark corner and begun to prepare for the morning meal. At the stable he met Colonel Steele, who shook his head.

"A gloomy prospect for getting down the mountain," said the latter. "Guido is *hors du combat*, as might have been expected. Flite has cut herself badly in one or two places on the rocks, and ought not to be out of the stable for a week at least; one of the carriage-horses has had a bad attack, they tell me, in the night, and indeed he looks pretty much used up this morning, and Leslie's clumsy beast can hardly hobble to his oats, owing to that pretty fall he had before he left you yesterday. I do not see anything for it but to put my horse, who is the only one in decent trim, before the carriage with the other, and send the ladies down, while we wait here till we are sent for."

"It is of the last importance that I should be in — by ten o'clock," said the young clergyman, in a hurried manner. "I will not wait for breakfast. I will walk on."

"Walk! My dear sir, I am a good walker myself; but I do not flatter myself that I could get within three miles of — before ten o'clock, or half-past, either. The state of the roads is terrible, you know, and the mud will make walking very serious business. But we can arrange it for you to go in the carriage, which I shall have got up at once, and the ladies will no doubt be ready to go the moment breakfast is completed. That is your only chance, and I think, if nothing occurs to detain you, you may be in at the hour you wish. You can direct the coachman to go at a good speed as soon as you get off the mountain."

Mr. Brockhulst had to yield, as his good sense told him Colonel Steele was right; it was certainly not a thing for any

man of average endurance to expect, to walk ten miles over a villanous rough road in an hour and a quarter, and read service and preach a sermon at the end of it. He walked back to the house, to find no one but Christine ready for breakfast. Mrs. Sherman appeared after the lapse of a half-hour. She was not in very good spirits; it would have been *temper* instead of spirits at fault if she had been in the bosom of her family. She had to wear her bonnet (which Madeline had ungraciously straightened out for her, and which still looked rather cowed and miserable), because she had no breakfast-cap, and because, for reasons of state, she never appeared without some exterior decorations on her head. Now, a bonnet at table never has a look of domestic comfort and enjoyment, much less of conviviality; and Mrs. Sherman's bonnet may be used as a reason for the entire absence both of comfort and enjoyment, not to say anything of conviviality, at that Sunday morning's meal.

The weather was the finest to be imagined, and the sunshine more than ever seemed "a glorious birth;" but the party all looked like so many blinking owls exposed to its brilliancy. Madeline seemed absolutely dull—pale and haggard, and not amiable when obliged to speak. Christine was very languid; Colonel Steele very solicitous to know if she were ill, and very uncomfortable at her coldness and apathy. Mr. Leslie was engrossed with the care of his sprained wrist and barked shins, and Mr. Brockhulst's state of mind excused his silence. The breakfast would not have been a long one, for no one seemed inclined to eat except Mr. Leslie—who never was known to refuse his oats—but Mrs. Sherman, totally thrown off her balance by having slept on a straw bed and dressed herself and come down without a cap, revolted openly at the coffee, and demanded that a second boiling should be made. This occasioned great delay, and the second attempt proving no happier than the first, Mrs. Sherman sent word she would try [the tea. There was none made. Then let some be made. Again a

long delay, during which Mr. Brockhulst tried to steady his mind by repeating the Thirty-Nine Articles to himself, and saying the multiplication-table backwards.

But making the tea was a long operation; the kettle had got "off the boil," and the fire was nearly out, the coals having been raked out to hurry up the second boiling of coffee, and being now scattered and dead. There was a great flying out to the wood-pile for chips, puffing and blowing at the coals, and anxious listening for the first symptom of a simmer from the kettle. During which time the party at the table thumped a little with their egg-spoons, munched a little toast, now very cold, talked about the weather, made a few poor jokes upon the breakfast, listened secretly a good deal to the march of events in the "lean to," and tried to be polite while they all felt very much exasperated.

At length the tea came—very feeble, of a pale copper color, and with the tea-leaves floating on the surface; the boiling of the water having been anticipated a few seconds by the anxious maid, and the making of the tea being altogether premature.

Mrs. Sherman pushed back her cup and rose from the table; would Colonel Steele order the horses to the door immediately—certainly Colonel Steele would. But Patrick had not had his breakfast; ten minutes were allowed to him, and then the horses were at the door. Although Mrs. Sherman had breakfasted in her bonnet, apparently armed *cap-à-pie* for travelling, there was still much to be done before they were *en route*. Madeline, who had to officiate as lady's maid, could not make her gloves button nor get her mantelet straight; and between the young belle's impatience and the old belle's self-will, there seemed a chance they would spend the balance of their days on the ——— mountain.

Finally, they were off!—just as the hands of the poor clergyman's watch marked nine twenty-five; an hour for a

ten miles' ride, of which six were of the roughest nature, and with a heavy baronche, and horses who had never before been together. In fact, the Colonel's horse was very little used to going in harness, and submitted with a very bad grace to the unaccustomed yoke. About half way down the mountain he began to kick, and at last succeeded in causing some break in the harness which necessitated another delay. Mr. Brockhulst and the coachman at last tinkered it up, and going very slowly to prevent its giving way, proceeded on their journey.

This was but the beginning of delays and accidents; at half past twelve the carriage drove into — just in time to meet the dispersing members of the Methodist, the Presbyterian, and the Baptist meetings. Mr. Brockhulst kept his seat firmly, but it must be confessed his heart sank very low as he caught the wondering eyes levelled at the box where he sat beside the coachman. Of course they met the Bishop: that he was prepared for. He had felt certain of it ever since the possibility of this detention had dawned upon his mind. She stared at the carriage, checked herself in a start of horror, pressed her lips together, and walked quickly on.

But the worst of it was passing the church itself, with its shut gate and locked door; the seeing half-a-dozen Sunday-school children playing together at a corner, and the knowing that this example of Sabbath-breaking by the minister was sinking deep into their minds. To do the young minister justice, he only thought of the scandal as it would injure others, never with the fear of its doing him personally any harm. Poor fellow! To the last day of his clerical career he felt the effects of that Sunday's history.

And Madeline and Christine each thought, as they welcomed the quiet of their own rooms, that the whole expedition was one which they would be glad to banish from their memory as well as from the memory of all who had had part in it.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OLD HUNDRED.

"A noble heart, like the sun, sheweth its greatest countenance in its lowest estate."

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

FROM that day forth Mr. Brockhulst's path was no longer strewn with roses; those that bloomed for him at the Hill were too thickly beset with thorns and of too bitter a perfume to deserve the name of roses. He began to see through Mrs. Sherman, and the sight brought him alarm and humiliation. He began to understand Madeline, he thought, and the knowledge gave him bitter pain. The certainty that he had been deceived in his reading of the one character, made him more certain that he had been deceived in the other. He forswore the society of Madeline, and eschewed the Hill as far as it was possible for him to do, considering his thousand parochial entanglements with Mrs. Sherman. He longed to break away entirely from her influence and manage parish matters as seemed good to him himself. But that was not so easy. Mrs. Sherman had got things in her own hands, and she had no idea of giving up the reins. Mr. Brockhulst found himself helpless; he himself had appointed Mrs. Sherman as the head of the two charitable societies connected with the church, and had placed her in charge of the parish school.

He literally found himself superseded in every department but the strictly clerical one; he still preached and administered the sacraments at his own discretion, but the surplice or the cassock in which he did it were not at all discretionary. The music was taken entirely out of his control; the change

worked by Mrs. Sherman in this department caused great rejoicing among the more refined people of the congregation, but there was a large proportion who shook their heads at the strange preludes and unfamiliar chants, and sat down doggedly at the beginning of the elongated Te Deums and pirouetting solos of the choir. A thoroughbred organist came up every Saturday night from town; one or two good voices were found among the country girls, Colonel Steele sang a fine tenor, and Madeline was prima donna. Her taste in music was very pure, and her voice of extraordinary power. She had found her greatest pleasure in this occupation for the past month, and the music really had been very fine. They were beginning to talk of it everywhere in town, and a good many, not otherwise interested, were attending service for the pleasure that the music gave them. A good deal that was Popish and a good deal that was operatic was of course discovered; but still people came to listen and to admire and to find fault. Certainly the choir took a wide range in their selections; if Mr. Brockhulst had known more of music he would have been the first to have restricted them; but he only heard the voice of Madeline, and he listened for nothing else.

But the old-fashioned people, with the Bishop at their head, were alarmingly disaffected. Not even the inroads upon the chancel had disodified them as much, nor the new hours for service, nor the new principles upon which the charities were dispensed. The abolition of the old tunes struck a blow deeper than all these; the service no more seemed the same to them; the church was no longer home.

The leader in the choir of other days, a great, heavily-built man, six feet tall, with a chest deep as an ocean cavern, had given up his place with the best and most forgiving temper; but his friends could not submit to his deposition with as good a grace. He was a favorite in the parish, and in the town as

well ; in his slow way, he was a good neighbor, a good brother, a good church member, and had spent fifty very blameless years among the people of ——. He was a brother of Richard Gilmore, and never having married, was a good deal at his brother's house, and very fond of Harry, who was his godson. He had more energy and purpose than Richard had, and was perhaps in every way a stronger man ; but the two were very much alike in their easy, moderate tempers, and their safe and wise philosophy.

Ever since he had been old enough to be proud of his deep, bass voice, it had been at the service of the church, and the great pleasure and interest of his life grew to be the rough exercise of this gift in that place. He was a really devout worshipper, with a good deal of the Methodist in him, which was, however, satisfied with the expression that it found in music, and which endeared to his great heart every line of the old hymns he had sung for so many years. His voice was tremendous, an unequalled bass or strength and depth, but his accent was deplorable, and his ear not of the best. In the old tunes to which he was accustomed he was tolerably correct, but it was quite impossible for him to turn the great torrent of his voice into new channels ; he could not keep up with the new organist, and could not learn a note of his new part ; and so at last he told the choir he was afraid he'd only be a hindrance to them, and he thanked 'em kindly for the pains they had been at to teach him, but he guessed he'd better give it up, and he wished 'em good luck in all heartiness, and then he took up his old music book, and with something swelling up painfully in his throat, went down the winding steps from the organ-loft for the last time.

On the next Sunday, even the musically-educated people missed his deep, familiar bass with regret, but soon all was forgotten in the glory of the new achievements of the choir. His familiar sobriquet of "Old Hundred" still clung to him, but

his voice was never heard in church, and only resounded now and then from under his low, blacksmith's shed between the sturdy strokes that echoed from the anvil. He still came regularly to church, undeterred by the evil counsel of his brother's wife, who was very bitter against the aristocratical intrusion. He sat under the gallery and looked huge and clumsy, and very much out of place, following the sermon with painful attention and beating time involuntarily to the music.

Phæbe Gilmore took up the affront to her brother-in-law very warmly. She left the church herself, and would have with drawn Harry from the Sunday-school, but for Richard's positive interdiction. He was not much of a church-goer himself, but he meant Harry should be brought up to be; and as soon as the boy was well enough, he sent him back to school; but Master Harry had not lain on the bed for three weeks and listened to the bitter talk of his mother and those sympathizing neighbors who loved to hear hard facts about their betters, without acquiring a good deal of knowledge on the subject. He imbibed his mother's prejudices in a degree, and went very sullenly back to Sunday-school, where he made himself so troublesome, and showed himself so stubborn, that he was soon complained of to the clergyman, whose experience with him in the class of every day made him quite ready to believe the worst that could be told.

The consequence was, a warning to his parents that unless he proved himself more docile, he would be dismissed both from day-school and from Sunday-school. There was a terrible scene at the cottage after this occurred, but Richard again carried the day, for the second time since this protracted campaign commenced, and Harry was sent back to school, with so bad a disposition towards it, though, that the course to be pursued with him became a subject of serious discussion.

Mr. Brockhulst consulted several of his vestrymen, who unanimously advised him (with the sound judgment usually dis-

played by people who only hear half a case) not to be tormented with the little rascal any further, but to dismiss him from the school. So, to poor Richard's great dismay, this at last was done, and Harry came home one morning, flushed and frightened, with the dread letter in his hand.

Poor Harry! The seeds that that morning's experience planted were the deadly growth that blasted his whole future. He did not deserve such a fate, happy, honest-hearted little loafer, believing only what his passionate mother taught him and acting up to the knowledge he possessed. In her vindictive utterings he thought he heard the truth; in the depressed and gloomy looks of his father, he read a confirmation of the fate that turned every one against him.

Phœbe Gilmore, indeed, had excuse for some of her complaints. Harry always had been treated harshly. Julian Upham set him on to much of his evil doings, and then left him to bear the punishment. And now, since this notorious affair in which Julian had so nearly proved the murderer of Harry, things had gone on just the same as ever, and had culminated in the dismissal of Harry and the entire escape of Julian from chastisement.

It was not very much wonder that money, and the authority that money brings, explained all this to Phœbe's mind; and the contempt thrown on her brother-in-law's faithful services for so many years, swelled the weight of grievances beyond her power of mind. Her ambition had been baulked in so many ways, it turned into a resentment against those who had so baulked it, and she had no stronger feeling now than the desire to oppose and injure them. She not only left the Church and made herself prominent in another, but she spread all manner of evil reports regarding those from whose communion she withdrew. Indeed, such a scandal was created by what she said of the young minister and Mrs. Sherman's ruling voice in everything, that the whole town was soon strongly prejudiced

against the clergyman and his lady patroness, and the matter came to the ears of those concerned.

Mrs. Sherman was strongly excited, and allowed her husband no rest day or night till he consented to give Richard Gilmore warning that the mill and cottage would be wanted for another tenant after his lease expired. His lease was very near its expiration, and this was truly a heavy blow to the easy-going man who had never dreamed of the possibility of ending his days under any other roof. It was like beginning the world afresh and for the first day or two he went about the old mill and its surroundings like a person in a dream.

Unfortunately, during these events, Dr. Upham was confined by illness to his room. It was some time before it came to his ears that Phœbe Gilmore had left the church and was in such a state of mind regarding it. He sent for her to come to him several times, but she never came, and so all chance of his influence was lost. Christine she treated with such coldness, it became impossible to do her any good through her, and the result was, Phœbe went on in her unfortunate and sinful course unchecked by any voice but that of her mild husband and his brother. Harry's dismissal from the school, however, and the notice to Richard to give up the mill, were so many arguments on her side she thought, and indeed for a while did silence her advisers.

Meanwhile, Richard began to look slowly round him for something to do next spring when his day of going out should come. Harry was turned loose on the town, and was fast becoming a little vagabond. Phœbe still sowed her angry seeds of mischief. Mrs. Sherman still did the Lady Bountiful, and worked maliciously to put down the Bishop and Phœbe and the disaffected. Mr. Brockhulst grew paler and thinner, and worked himself to death without any heart in his work, knowing that there was a fault somewhere hidden in it that turned it into failure. Dr. Upham watched the troubles from

his quiet room of sickness with many regrets, but with a serious trust that they would all terminate harmoniously. Christine felt them deeply, and kept as much away from the Hill as it was possible for her to do, and tried to throw all her influence on Mr. Brockhulst's side. Madeline was in a strange state of restlessness and perverseness, now throwing herself heart and soul into the quarrel, and riding rough-shod over all the village people who had meddled in the matter, and now tossing it all aside in disgust and laughing at both sides, and doing a great deal of harm to all. Dr. Catherwood looked on thoughtfully, and saw no way of doing good, and so was silent; spending most of his evenings at home, never going to the Hill and Parsonage unless expressly sent for, and working with his usual kindness among the poor and suffering.

And so the heat of summer evaporated and crystallized itself into the bright, clear, sparkling days of autumn; the nuts were brown in the forests, the grapes hung ripe on the garden walls, the leaves began to fall from the trees that shaded the broad streets, and the hillsides grew yellow and brown.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE END OF THE SUMMER'S CAMPAIGN.

"Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher; then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher; the nice yellow guineas for me."

BURNS.

It was one of the last and brightest days of October; Madeline Clybourne's little room was full of trunks and boxes, and dresses, folded and unfolded, and Madeline herself, with a discontented air, lay on the bed with a novel in her hand. Mrs. Clybourne, with a very harassed and worn expression, was busied about the packing; Madeline felt this was not right, she had made a great many remonstrances, and in truth would have been more comfortable to have tired herself out with the work than to have lain still and watched her mother do it. But she had not been very well for the last month, and she was bidden to keep quiet and to save herself for the evening. In the evening all the people from the Hill, Christine and one or two others, were coming there to tea. The next morning Mrs. Sherman was going to town for the winter; the house at the Hill would once more be closed, and the gay season of — was at its end.

Mrs. Sherman was secretly glad to be going. She was a little tired of "Dorcas" and the ragged school; and the Bishop and her colleagues were bearing pretty hard upon her. She felt as if the town would be a very welcome change, and she was turning her back on — with a feeling of some relief. She thought the church should take care of itself another year; it had proved ungrateful. She had been very anxious to take

Christine and Madeline both with her for a visit, to take off the edge of the first few days' *ennui*, but Christine was not to be persuaded, and only Madeline was going. Mrs. Clybourne had consented very readily to her daughter's being absent for a month, and she sincerely hoped the month might be prolonged into the season. It was Madeline's only chance of seeing society at all, for her wardrobe, her musical education, and the additional expenses of their more enlarged way of living, had already, in these few months, eaten up two-thirds of the widow's narrow income.

The wrinkles were deepening fast in Mrs. Clybourne's handsome face; she looked thin and worn, and excepting in society, was troubled and silent; Madeline felt very unhappy at home—things were not going right about the money, she was sure, although her mother made no confidence of her. She gave her handsome clothes, and though Madeline wanted the handsome clothes and yearned for them with the ardor of a young and pretty woman, she felt uncomfortable at every dollar that was expended for her decoration, and felt vaguely that it was not right, and that she should have more self-respect and be more happy if she could get altogether out of this state of things. She hoped it would not last long; of course it would not, she should soon be in a position to relieve her mother's cares and to forget there was such a thing in the world as the cares that narrow incomes bring. No doubt it would have been nobler in Madeline to have stood still for a moment, looked before and after, shaken off the shackles of education and prejudice, released herself from the trammels of the world, and taken the purer and freer life. But Madeline was very young, ill-taught in her duty, and strong in her ambition, and her respect for her mother was still too great to admit of her independent action.

Mrs. Clybourne was relieved on more accounts than one, to have her go with Mrs. Sherman. She saw that Madeline's stay at home during these quiet winter months could have but one

result—after the turmoil and excitement of life at the Hill was over, there would be nothing to counteract the germ of sentiment which the mother had been so long combating; she knew her daughter's heart much better than the daughter did herself. The young clergyman was a worse enemy to Mrs. Clybourne's peace than even the fast melting income was. She had seen from the first the sort of romance that surrounded him in Madeline's eyes; she had interpreted correctly her sudden interest in church and charity. She knew what her restlessness and uncertain temper meant—her delight in sacred music, her enthusiasm for certain books and theories. She was much too wise to betray the discoveries she had made. Madeline never guessed her mother had a suspicion of the foolish thoughts that were dancing through her head all day, nor that to her insight she owed it that they were so often broken in upon and scattered by suggestions of ambition and hopes of admiration and conquest in society. Madeline did not know exactly whether she wanted to go to town or not; her mother filled her head with ideas of the pleasures that she had in prospect, but her heart was clinging unconsciously to the summer's romance. She was angry and mortified by the neglect to which she could not blind herself, but she felt a hope that her absence would prove too strong a trial to him, and she should see him at Mrs. Sherman's house in town, long before her visit there was ended.

The summer's campaign, gay as it had been and full of pleasure to the daughter, had been anything but satisfactory to the mother. Among all the men who had surrounded Madeline, and whose attentions to her had been lavish, there was not one whom she could think of marrying, or who, in fact, seemed to think of marrying her. Society, just then, was full of very young and very insignificant men. Some of the gayest and most desirable of these stayed constantly at Mrs. Sherman's house; they were exquisites in dress, some of them tolerably amiable and

well bred, but most of them indifferently educated, belonging to families of no social importance, and all, without exception, unable to marry any one who had not a fortune to bring to them. Mrs. Clybourne, used to the more refined and exclusive society of the last generation, could with difficulty reconcile herself to the necessity of Madeline's associating with such men; but seeing that her success as a beauty depended upon her favor with such as these, she laid aside her prejudices as became a faithful mother, and entertained them at her house, and bade Madeline be amiable among them. She could not fail to see that constant intercourse with young men for whom she felt no shadow of respect, and whose manners were free and careless with every one they met, had lowered and altered Madeline's tone of thought; and not only her tone of thought, but her manners, her style of dress, her choice of language, had suffered a shade of change. Only a shade, however; for the magnet within, with all its trembling vibrations, was as yet pointing true, and the careful mother's whole ingenuity was now expended in shattering that guide and diverting that strong influence.

This bright, cool October day was a very trying one to Mrs. Clybourne; besides packing Madeline's trunks and putting the last stitch upon a dozen things, neglected by the careless wearer, and ordering and preparing tea for perhaps a dozen guests (no insignificant duty this in such a household as hers), she had two great weights upon her mind; the first was, the news of the illness of one of Susie's children, at whose bedside she felt she ought to be; and the second, the arrival home, the day before, of her worthless young son, Raymond. He had turned up at intervals ever since she had first sent him off, at the precise moment when she had felt that a straw more would break her down completely. She had, at this time, been feeling quite safe about him, and had, perhaps, been a little more lavish in her expenditures on account of this very security that he was

doing well, and was out of the way for a long time to come. With great effort she had obtained for him a valuable clerkship in a mercantile house in China, where with decent industry she was assured he could not fail to rise. She knew he had not decent industry and she did not expect him to rise; she only hoped that as, in the strict discharge of duty, very little was required of him, he might sit still for a while. Alas! he would not even consent to do that; he did not find life in Shanghai to his taste; he came back in the next steamer and presented himself at home without any other excuse for what he had done than that it was "too deuced unpleasant hot."

Poor Mrs. Clybourne! Here he was again upon her hands with his expensive tastes and reckless habits, when by the strictest economy she had hoped to struggle through the winter by herself, while Madeline stayed in town; and he was such an injury to Madeline at just this time; a loafer of a brother, having neither dignity to protect nor good name to advantage a sister, is always a serious drawback to her success. No man wants to marry a girl whose brother is sure to be a disgrace, and whose family are a dead weight on his hands. If Raymond had only stayed a year away till Madeline's future lot was settled, he might then have come back, and his mother would have shared her slender income with him cheerfully, nay, given him all of it that necessity did not claim, for she had no ambition but the success and advancement of her children.

Meanwhile, she felt her duty was growing a hopelessly heavy burden, and that life presented few charms to her of any kind. Middle life is always a trying, weary point in the long journey, even to those whose aims are high; but when only lighted by ambition, and still consecrated to the world in however generous a form, it is gloomy beyond expression.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ANOTHER CHANGE.

"The wind blows out, the bubble dies,
The spring entombed in autumn lies;
The stream dries up, the star is shot,
The flight is past, and man forgot."

KING.

THE little parlor of Mrs. Clybourne's cottage looked bright and cheerful enough to satisfy even its weary mistress that evening. People from large houses often enjoy being entertained in small ones, and Mrs. Sherman said with great truth, the hours she spent at Mrs. Clybourne's were among the pleasantest she had ever known in —.

She was very tired of her great rooms and the monotonous march of events in her household economy. She often declared Mrs. Clybourne the happiest of women in having such a little *bijou* of a house, without any care at all, without any housekeeper to feel her importance and ride over her; without any men-servants to get impudent and be discharged; without any orders to give for dinner-parties, and without the Judge to be dissatisfied with whatever she might do. Mrs. Clybourne always smiled, and said cheerfully: "Yes, it was very pleasant; certainly she had a great deal to be thankful for." She knew very well she should gain nothing by asking sympathy in her mean and unromantic trials; poverty is not a misfortune that exalts the sufferer. Money troubles are troubles that had better be kept always in the background. Mrs. Clybourne was wisely silent about the years of her life, if they were all put together,

which she had spent in worrying to get the ends together, in little devices to stretch out a cobweb along an acre without breaking it—the dulling of her “cunning brain,” the drying up and exhausting of all her nobler feelings, in the contemptible but inevitable struggle with the little, mean, and sordid part of living.

She meant, generously, that Madeline should know nothing of this; but Madeline was too quick to be deceived; she knew there was pinching poverty at the bottom of her mother’s purse, so rigidly shut against all self-indulgences, so conscientiously opened whenever her amusement or advantage was in question. And the only way to end all this was for her to make a wealthy marriage, which she had a general intention of doing, though she had grown rather averse to thinking about it, except in a very general and indefinite way.

Although she had been *ennuyée* and out of spirits all day, she looked very well and was very brilliant in the evening. Mrs. Sherman had the Colonel, Mr. Leslie, and a Mr. Bowden, staying at the Hill, whom she brought with her; Christine, who was looking her prettiest in a white dress and the favorite malachites; and two of the Miss Richfields, completed the party. Mr. Brockhulst had been too much engaged to come, and Dr. Catherwood, as usual, had found some excuse for staying away. Raymond was very gentlemanly looking, in fact it was the only thing he was, and it generally carried him through a month of favor with those he met for the first time, and Mrs. Sherman with her usual discrimination was making quite a hero of him. She regretted he had come back just as they were going away; he would have added so much to the pleasure of their summer; but he must come and stay with them in town while Madeline was there; she should not let him off without a promise.

Mrs. Sherman was fond of cards, and Raymond of course played with her. The others all fell into the same amusement, and presently every one was more or less engrossed with whist

At the end of one game at his table, while shuffling the cards for the beginning of another, Raymond said in his slow, lounging manner: "What do you think I heard in the town this afternoon? Mr. Brockhulst has resigned, and his resignation has been unanimously accepted."

"What!" cried Mrs. Sherman, with a start, while Madeline dropped her cards into her lap.

"Impossible!" cried several voices.

"I have not the least faith in it," exclaimed Mrs. Sherman, while the elder Miss Richfield said wisely, it did not surprise her in the least, from what she had heard her father say. Now Mr. Richfield was a warden, and all eyes turned upon Miss Richfield with great interest. Miss Richfield felt herself invested with a good deal of importance from that circumstance, and declined to be explicit, as people always do when they feel themselves invested with importance; but she could only say, it did not surprise her in the least; on the contrary, it would have surprised her much more if he had not resigned. This was confirmation sure, coming from a warden's daughter, and the fact was accepted in its naked deformity.

"The ungrateful man," exclaimed Mrs. Sherman, with great warmth of manner; "after all I have done for him—well, I never shall believe in clergymen again."

A great laugh of approval from the gentlemen followed this remark; ecclesiastical stock was going down, they said; now there would be some chance of appreciation for the laity.

"Yes," drawled Raymond, "now I shan't be waked up every morning by that horrid bell at six."

"Now Miss Christine will have time to do something besides go to church," said Colonel Steele.

"And Miss Madeline will not be always working sermon covers, and Gothic pattern slippers," added Mr. Leslie.

"And there will not be any more Fairs at present, I suppose," said Mr. Bowden, who had an aggrieved recollection

of the money he had been obliged to spend at the recent festivity at the Hill.

"Shan't you see him to say good-by to him, Mrs. Sherman?" asked Madeline, trying to be very nonchalant as she assorted her cards. "My lead, did you say?" and she played the queen of trumps at random.

"Miss Madeline! what are you thinking of?" cried Mr Leslie.

While Mrs. Sherman answered absently as she put down her king: "See him? Why, no, unless he should come up in the morning. But he will probably be in town after a day or two, and then I shall tell him what I think of him. Mr. Clybourne, if I only knew what trumps you held!"

And so the great news came and passed, and beyond a few allusions to it in the course of the evening, there was no further interest shown. Christine felt glad that it was over. She had known this or something worse must come, and now it was a relief to feel he was going away. She wondered to see Madeline taking it so quietly, but after all, she must have been mistaken in Madeline's feelings towards him. The fact was, Madeline was thinking, "I shall surely see him in a day or two in town, and then there will be an explanation. He will stay at Mrs. Sherman's, and it will be all made up."

Christine had Colonel Steele for her partner, and she was dreading every moment the breaking up of the party, and the possibility of his going home with her. It was a short distance to the Parsonage; Ann, the waitress, was coming for her at half-past ten o'clock, but she knew very well Colonel Steele would make Ann go back and would walk with her himself. This would be his last opportunity of speaking to her till she came to town to pay Mrs. Sherman the visit her father had promised for next month; and Christine was very right in conjecturing he meant to find a chance to speak with her. He rightly divined, if she had any kindness for him, this was the

best moment, when the freedom of country life was still on his side, the sentiment called up by the ended summer, and the breaking up of a pleasant and intimate companionship. He played rather an inattentive game, he was listening so carefully for Ann's step on the piazza, and was so much afraid lest Leslie, or Bowden, or that wretched Raymond should get before him in sending Ann away, and saying: "Miss Upham, it is too early yet; you must let me walk over to the Parsonage with you after our game is ended."

Christine was listening, too, for Ann's approach; it was not quite half-past ten when she heard the gate open; her heart gave a nervous little bound, and she resolved afresh upon the words to use in declining Colonel Steele's kind offer and going off instantly and alone with Ann. Colonel Steele heard the gate open, too, and the words prepared an hour ago were upon his lips, when a step came on the piazza, which was not Ann's by any chance. It was a man's tread; it crossed the piazza, entered the hall, and the parlor door opened and admitted Dr. Catherwood.

Colonel Steele ground his teeth together. The moment Christine caught sight of him she dropped her cards and half rose, and ejaculated in an apprehensive tone, "Julian?"

Dr. Catherwood's brow contracted for an instant; it was not pleasant to feel the sight of him brought a painful association only. "Well, what about Julian?" he said, with a pleasant smile, as he went up to the table where Mrs. Clybourne sat, and apologized for neglecting her invitation.

"I fancied he might be ill and you had come for me," she said, not entirely reassured by his deliberation.

"Well, I have come for you," he answered, returning to her side; "and Julian is ill, but not seriously. Now! no alarm, no hurry; I assure you he is not much amiss. Go, get your cloak while I make your excuses for you; I know you will have no peace till you get back to him."

Christine disappeared before he had finished speaking, and when she returned she hardly gave him time to say good-night. Mrs. Sherman, however, seized her and detained her several minutes, kissing her good-by, and making her confirm her father's promise about her visit in November, and all the gentlemen had much to say about their hopes of seeing her very soon in the city for the winter, and Madeline had a great many kisses to give and many charges about writing, and Colonel Steele had to content himself with a mere good-by, and see her leave the house with the man of whom, notwithstanding all his protests, he was sure he had reason to be much afraid.

CHAPTER XXX.

PHOEBE GILMORE'S REMORSE.

"And is there in God's world so drear a place,
Where the loud bitter cry is rais'd in vain?
Where tears of penance come too late for grace,
As on th' uprooted flower the genial rain?"

KESL.

WHILE Mrs. Sherman and the party at the Clybournes' glanced off their cards and chatted in parenthesis of Mr. Brockhulst's resignation, another group, in another very different room, talked in a very different way about it.

A tallow candle stood on the deal-table of the kitchen in the miller's house; Phœbe sitting beside it, flashed her bright, sharp needle in and out the heavy piece of work upon her lap, bent her head down and listened silently to the two men talking by her, only emitting now and then from her black eyes a gleam of malicious pleasure, or from her compressed lips a sharp and stinging sentence. Harry, on a bench beside the fire, roasted chestnuts in the ashes, and did not lose a word said by his elders. The miller and his brother were talking moderately and sensibly; the miller's wife was giving point and venom to all their matter-of-fact remarks. She had a secret consciousness that she had helped to bring this work about, and it gave her a triumphant pleasure, but also a little sensation of remorse and apprehension. It piqued her that neither her husband nor his brother would express the exultation that they should have felt in the downfall of the minister.

Old Hundred, sitting forward with his elbows squared and

his hands upon his knees, said openly that he was sorry that the young minister had not tried a little longer; it was a pity for a man to give up heart the first mistake he made. Richard did not say much one way or the other; the fact was, Harry's dismissal from school was a sore thing with him yet; if he had been capable of bearing malice towards any human being, he would have borne it towards the man who had, however ignorantly struck him in the softest and tenderest corner of his heart. He felt that his boy was injured and hardly dealt by, and he could not quite forgive the offender. His heart was sore about a good many things—and very heavy when he thought about the future. He did not see what he was to do. At his time of life it was hard to begin the world afresh; things looked insurmountable to him now, that, when he was a younger man, would have presented no barrier at all; all doubts were burdens, and all burdens lay like lead upon him. Still he was not bitter, nor morose, not even sullen; only silent, and heavy, and depressed.

His brother came down almost every evening now, for he felt that Richard needed him; and though there was little said or done to clear up the cloud, still the trouble drew them close together and made a sort of strength between them.

Old Hundred had not much to offer Richard, except his strong hand and great kind heart. He was not the sort of man to be a prosperous man; he had worked hard all his life, but his earnings had not stayed by him; and poor relations and poor neighbors had had no compassion on his purse. All that he had, and it was very little, was understood to be for Harry when he was done with it. He began to wish now, when he saw his brother's trouble and saw no way out of it, that he had been

little harder-hearted, and had not given way to everything that moved his pity. What had he to offer now to him and his family, turned houseless on the world without a cent ahead? Nothing, absolutely nothing, but a roof to shelter them. The

little tumble-down cottage which stood by his blacksmith-shop was so out of repair he could not fancy Phœbe living in it without a sinking of the heart. He had lived in it till he had got used to its leaks, and cracks, and unsteady floors; when the wall fell down in one room, he shut it up and went into another; when the rain found its way through one corner, he moved his bed into another, and so time had gone on crumbling his house before his eyes for years, and he had not heeded its encroachments on his comfort; but when it came before his mind as a home for those he loved, it seemed indeed a ruin to him. He lost no time in planning its renovation; before spring it must be fit to live in, and that by the work of his own hands, for there was no ready money to lay out upon it.

He had come down to-night to propose to Richard to go up to-morrow, and with him begin to work upon it, and so on through the winter whenever they had a spare day; in that way neither need lose time nor money, reasoned the unworldly brother. Poor old fellow, he felt himself a great unwieldy wall about which these helpless ones could only cling and climb, and find a miserable support by their own tenacity; he could do nothing for them but stand silent in his clumsy pity. Phœbe's perverse course sometimes tried him very much, but he could not find it in his heart to say anything to her, now they were in such trouble—and trouble of her own making, too. When they were all together under one roof, he thought perhaps he might persuade her by his daily kindness to give up these thoughts of malice, and to try the easier yoke and the lighter burden of Christian charity.

He longed to see Richard taking the true view of his misfortunes, and getting up like a man to meet them, and calling them by their right name. Phœbe's influence upon him was bad; it always had been, his brother thought, though people said Phœbe had been the making of him, and had kept him up to what he was. Her ambition indeed had been the stimulant

that had made his life outwardly more prosperous than his brother's, and inwardly less true and Christian. He was almost a Christian; he was very near the kingdom of God by nature, but he just missed it by a hair's breadth. He was not strong enough to put aside the daily promptings of the woman who had been the love of his youth, and was the companion of his life. She called herself a Christian; well, that was not what he called Christianity exactly, and he had not the wisdom to discriminate between the pure standard he had within and the imperfect life brought before his daily view, and so Phœbe had been doing him evil and not good all the days of her life; while she thought, and the world said, she was the best one of the two, and to her alone was owing all the prosperity that had ever fallen to their lot. She did not feel as ready to embrace the credit of their present state of trouble, though the world did not hesitate to put a large share of it, too, upon her shoulders.

She was so unreasonable and bitter whenever any mention of their future plans was attempted, that it was tacitly understood between the two men that no allusions to them should be made in her presence; so, when anything was to be discussed, Richard followed his brother slowly out into the path, and the two generally stood for an hour or so beside the gate, planning for her comfort and the boy's, and for hard work and self-denial for themselves. When Old Hundred rose up that night out of his chair, he seemed to threaten the ceiling, but he stopped just short of it, happily, when he was erect, and took his pipe out of his mouth, with a look towards Richard that the latter understood.

"Will you give me a light, Phœbe," he said, approaching the table, "and I'll take myself and my pipe out of your clean kitchen before we get a-going?"

"You needn't be so careful of it," she said, tartly, holding the candle towards him. "I don't take any trouble to keep it

clean nowadays: I'll take pains to leave it smoked and black and dirty as I can for your fine lady's tenant in the spring. It would do my heart good to see it burned down to the ground before it brought her in a cent of rent; it's sure to do her some kind of mischief, take my word for it."

"You make a mistake, Phoebe; you make a mistake," he said, taking up his hat, and going slowly to the door, followed by his brother. "I don't say it to hurt you, but I wish you could feel different. It would make you easier, depend upon it; it would make you easier."

And with that mild reproof he left her.

For a long time Richard and he stood by the gate in the darkness, smoking and talking at intervals of what lay heavy at the hearts of both. At last they parted with an agreement to meet in the morning early at the cross-roads, Richard with his horse and cart, and both with their shovels, to draw some sand for the mason-work about the old house, upon which they must begin next week.

In the morning, after the silent breakfast (breakfast was always silent now), Richard put the horse before the strong, new cart that must be sold with the other fixtures in the spring, to pay off what there was no chance of his being able to pay otherwise. He came into the kitchen, which was rather dark and gloomy, the sun not being fairly above the horizon, and got his pipe and paper of tobacco, and fumbled about the cupboard for something which he could not find, and which, in fact, he did not want so much as a cheery word from his wife, who, busy about the table, turned her back upon him, and did not offer a word to him of any kind.

She knew where he was going, and what his business for the day was—but she could not bring herself to speak of it with any degree of moderation. The change was too bitter for her pride, and she could not be brought to feel gratitude for the shelter of her brother-in-law's roof. Richard felt sore at heart

about beginning the work without a word of encouragement from her. There was absolutely nothing else before them if they turned with contempt from this, and he must go forward in it with her consent or without it—but without her sanction and advice he never had done anything before, and it came heavy to him at just this time. She had forbidden him ever to speak to her about it, when first it had been mentioned, and so, though he lingered in the kitchen for some moments, he did not dare to bring the subject up. She knew what he was waiting for, and there was a storm within as she busied herself silently about the breakfast, turning away from him.

At last he went out without a word, with a slow and heavy step. As soon as she heard the wheels turning on the gravel, she half-relented, and went quickly to the door. Twice she raised her voice to speak, and twice the wicked spirit caught back the words, and stubbornly and in silence she watched him walk away beside the cart out into the dim and foggy road with bent head and dull, slow step.

She felt a weight of lead upon her heart as she went back to her work; a weight that grew heavier and heavier as the day went on. She found herself harsh and sharp with Harry, but that was no unusual thing now; she felt she had a right to pay back even on him some of the evil coin that fate had foisted on her.

The morning passed slowly away, though she worked hard, and, with an unacknowledged compunction, tried to revoke her evil resolution of the day before. She scrubbed and scoured the kitchen till it looked cleaner and fresher than it had done for many weeks; then with a softness of heart she did not admit even to herself, she arranged the dinner with express reference to the taste and pleasure of her husband. This was a soothing sort of occupation to her; she lingered on it with some satisfaction, and though she knew from old experience the moment his foot sounded on the threshold, the stubborn cold-

ness would come back, it still allayed her unspoken remorse somewhat to feel she was providing for his comfort.

Twelve o'clock struck; then half-past, and still he did not come. Harry came in, and was very much out of temper at being kept waiting for his dinner; his mother was harsh with him, and sent him out again very angry. The room was all in order; the table was laid; the dinner was steaming hot before the fire; Phœbe had nothing to do whatever; and too tired and spiritless to be impatient, she sat down by the window to await her husband's coming.

Not till it was some time past one, did she experience absolute anxiety. Then she got up and walked to the door, then down the path, looking up and down the road. There was no one in sight, and she came back, feeling a little irritated. Perhaps he had not meant to come home to dinner, or had agreed to take his dinner with his brother, and had not told her, in return for her obstinate silence about his going. But no; that was not Richard; he could not have done a thing to vex her, whatever provocation he might have; neither could he have forgotten. He was considerate and careful of giving trouble, but she was so used to his slow, steady thoughtfulness, that she seldom reflected on her happiness in being married to a man who was neither selfish, nor surly, nor tyrannical, but who had put her will voluntarily in place of his own.

She softened a little while she thought of this—a rare thought with her—and went over to the door again and listened. Presently she heard the lumbering of a cart along the road, and, presto! all the softness went. She glanced up at the clock, and felt she had good reason to be angry at having had her work put back an hour and more; she felt sharp and stubborn as she set the meat upon the table and stooped over the kettle in which the potatoes lay white and mealy, overdone and ready to fall to pieces at the first touch of the ladle. She had some tart words ready on her lips to greet her tardy

husband's entrance with, but several minutes passed, and he did not come. She went to the door. There the cart stood at the gate, the horse docile and comfortable, pulling at a tuft of grass beside it. The cart was half-full of sand, but the back board was down, and the sand had been jolting out all along the road. With a sharp misgiving, Phœbe ran down the path and looked in both directions. There was no one coming; there was nothing unusual in sight but a trail of the white sand lying all along the road as far as she could see. The sun had come out and was shining brightly, but the road was damp and muddy with the early morning showers. The reins lay on the ground, covered with mud and sand, through which they had been dragging. What did this mean?

Phœbe's hands shook as she fastened them to the post beside the gate, and running into the house caught up her bonnet, called to Harry, but did not wait to hear his answer, and started down the road. She was very tired with her morning's work, and the agitation and alarm had made her knees so weak and trembling, that she had more than once to sit down by the roadside to recover strength. She tried to persuade herself there was nothing to alarm her in the horse's coming home; he had got unfastened and started off while Richard was busy about something else; but still she hurried on with an apprehension of misfortune.

It was a long way to the bank where the men had started to draw sand, a full mile and a half, and the road lay out of town, and was lonely and unfrequented. Phœbe felt as if she were in a nightmare—she realized the distance so, and the possible misfortune, and the hurry and the weakness of her limbs. She seemed to be smothering, and she took off her sun-bonnet and fanned herself with it as she hurried forward. Sometimes she ran for a few steps, and then she had to stop and lean against a tree or fence to get her breath and ease the leaping of her heart. She could follow the trail of sand a long way ahead,

Such a long way! She felt as if it would have been easier if she had not seen such a length of road stretching ahead of her over which she had to go, before she got rid of this awful suspicion, the very presence of which in her mind, though nothing but a suspicion and with almost no foundation, seemed enough to drive her mad.

There was a turn in the road just this side of the embankment; a clump of cedar-trees jutted down to the edge of the highway from the bank above, and shut out all that was beyond. When she reached it she paused a moment and pressed both hands against her heart. She should see Richard as she turned the corner if he were there and well, and she felt even then a faint struggle of pride in betraying her excitement; a very faint struggle, though, that was lost in her anxiety; and hardly breathing from the intensity of her feeling, she went forward a few steps, turned the corner, and looked towards the quarter of the bank where the excavations had been made.

It was about two hundred yards from where she stood; many people, men and women, stood about it, with strangely expressive faces; the sound of shovels and picks was almost all that was heard, except the occasional low voices of the crowd, and the quick, sharp word of command and inquiry from those out of sight behind the bank. There was a great fresh mass of sand upon the ground below; and above, a freshly broken, uneven, ragged edge standing out, with grass-roots dangling down, and pebbles and sand still rattling occasionally from it. Phœbe knew all at that first glance as well as if she had been there an hour ago when that last fatal spade-thrust loosened the tiny atoms that had so long been impending. She felt the horrid shock, the sudden blow, the instantaneous darkness, the smothering, paralysing weight, the cry of agony, muffled and unavailing.

It was very wonderful that she did not faint and fall. She walked straight on towards the group, and stopped when in

full view of those at work. Some one caught sight of her, and the crowd turned towards her. A murmur of pity and regret broke from them; the poor thing, they cried, while some of the women ran towards her, and some of them shrank away. They surrounded her, but she pushed them off and tried to make her way up to the bank.

"Keep her back," cried one of the foremost men, in a voice harsh and hoarse with feeling; and the women drew her back and forced her to stand quietly in their midst. She was too weak to resist, and she stood supported by the arms of two or three of them in full sight of the desperate workers. Her face was grey and drawn into strong, sharpened lines; her eyes were fixed and staring. It was a scene of intense and painful interest; none the less striking and terrible that the sleeping fields and bright autumn woods beyond were lying under a brilliant sky, and that a glorious flood of sunshine was bathing the whole place. The contrast of this outward quiet and the horrible knowledge possessed by every mind, was most affecting; the dreadful struggle for life, the death-pangs of two strong men, the living anguish of those from whom they were torn away, made the sunshine a most painful sight—a sight that added to the picture its most vivid touches.

The men worked with resolve and desperation; the sweat poured from their set and frowning faces; the great cords stood out on their bared arms; there was no word spoken between them, as one relieved the other and stood by for a few moments to recover strength. A boy held a bucket of water and silently dipped cupful after cupful to those who fell back exhausted to give place to fresher hands. There were more men than spades, and more spades than could be used upon the space denoted by the freshly-opened sand, so that many had to stand and watch while the few worked and the fewer still directed. There were children staring with frightened looks, women crying and wringing their hands, and a few standing about the

poor wife with silent faces of compassion. The click of the spades, the fall of the soft sand, was painfully distinct through the occasional whisper of the women and ejaculations of the men. At last there was a smothered exclamation from the foremost worker; a pause of a single second, then a plunge of all the spades into the yielding sand, a silence that seemed to choke the breath, a low murmur of some feeling that she could not understand, as she saw them throw away their spades and bend down anxiously. The crowd pressed nearer, the men cried harshly to them to keep back; the boy's bucket of water was in demand; the foremost ordered the outside ones to move back and give them air; the crowd hardly breathed with the intensity of their excitement.

At last the men in front rose up and shook their heads, and sorrowfully took up their spades again.

All this while Phoebe had been struggling with her keepers; at last she burst from them and pressed forward through a crowd that could not but give way at sight of her, up to where the body lay. It was not Richard, it was his brother; she did not glance again at him, but fixed her eyes upon the bank where the men were hard at work, though with less heart, alas, this time.

Meanwhile the women and some of the men gathered round the lifeless body, unwilling yet to give him up. But the noble fellow lay face upwards to the sunshine with such a placid look of satisfaction and security, it seemed to mock their efforts. It is no use, they said at last and then drew back and gazed at him reverently. Not a bruise or wound about him, only a little sand among his grizzled hair and on his working clothes. A manly figure, grand in its proportions; an honest face, noble in its repose. There was no mark of death about him; his flesh was warm, his limbs fell supple and easy as in life—only—only his heart was still, his pulse was gone. The sunshine fell full upon him and on the awe-struck groups about him; his face

was still and happy as if all the goodness and kindness of his life were passing in dreams before him—their faces were pale and ghastly at the thought of the death that seemed to have left no shadow upon him who had passed through it.

At last there came another pause among the workers; with careful hands they dragged out his unfortunate companion and placed him beside him on the grass. With a piercing cry that rang for days in the ears of those that heard it, Phœbe flung herself upon her husband's lifeless body. The women shuddered and hid their faces; the men walked away and tried not to hear the agony that rent their hearts with pity.

Poor little Harry! What had he done to deserve his fate? Everything seemed against him. That day and that night he felt as if he were frozen, and were only half-awake after a dreadful dream. He was afraid of his dead father; he was afraid of his wild-eyed mother; he was afraid of the solemn-faced neighbors; he was afraid of his own self. He was too old to run to his mother to be comforted, or to receive pity from any one about him. He was too young to throw off his grief and rush into excitement to get rid of it. He did not understand it; he was horror-stricken. The goodness and tenderness of his heart were petrified; he turned coldly away from his mother's passionate embrace, and repaid with stubborn silence the kindness of the neighbors. A heartless boy, an ungrateful son, they said; and that awful calamity was a long step down in Harry's downward course.

And Phœbe, wild with remorse and grief, melting with a tenderness that came too late; widowed in heart; hopeless, as far as this world went—was it, too, a step downward for her? Alas! yes. She had cut herself off from all those with whom her early religious life had been associated; she had made it impossible for any of them to approach her except her old pastor whom the hand of disease alone kept back from her. The better feelings of her heart could only have been reached by him,

but to him she would not go, and he could not come to her. The house was full of preachers and exhorters—the leaders of her new faith—people with hearts full of goodness, with eyes brimming with pity, with lips running over with piety. But it all seemed cant to her, used to so different a religious school. It was all associated with her perversity and error. She felt her heart revolting from them, and they did her little good. Her agony was intense; her nature was wholly beyond their experience and comprehension. In her first moments of distracted grief, she had felt she could “curse God and die”—curse religion, curse all that she had sinned about, all that had failed her in her hour of need.

People told her she had been a good wife, and asked her to take comfort in that; and she thought of the honest love she had undervalued, the strong influence she had abused, and she wished that she were lying dead beside him to whom she had all her life been doing evil. They called upon her to repose her faith on the Maker whom she had always served, and she thought with bitterness of the false service she had rendered and the cruel wages with which she was being paid. They told her to trust in her Saviour, when her Saviour was but a name to her. She did not know His heart; she had never felt His love; there was nothing to trust in there. They exhorted her to repent and confess her sins, and she felt that she could hurl the counsel back into the very face of Heaven and cast herself down and die. She had received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins; and when she rose up from the days of her bitter mourning, it was with a heart of adamant, sinews and nerves of steel.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ORDEAL.

"God—satisfied and Earth—undone."

E. B. BROWNING.

DR. CATHERWOOD had told the truth about Julian's illness that night. It was not serious; it was only of a few days' duration; and though it had its usual effect of making Christine look pale and keeping Dr. Catherwood there through one night, and bringing him to the house several times a day for the succeeding week, it did not leave any important results behind it. His attacks were gradually lessening in their violence and frequency as he grew older, and Dr. Catherwood, who never looked upon his health as anything but of the most precarious nature, was beginning to speak and feel more encouragingly about him. It was possible he might yet be a strong man, he said; though looking at the slight, pale, undersized boy, it was difficult to see where he grounded his possibility.

After Julian's illness was passed, there had come a gap in Dr. Catherwood's visiting at the Parsonage; then Dr. Upham had been ill again, and he had been sent for, and now was coming every day, at the Doctor's earnest and specified request. Immediately upon Mr. Brockhulst's resignation, there had been an urgent and affectionate appeal to him to resume the charge of St. Philip's. It was pretty generally felt in the congregation that they had had enough of the new *régime*, and that a return to the old ways would be very acceptable to all. The conservative, substantial men, who had stood aside during the ascen-

dency of the Sherman faction, now came forward, and the reins of government were very gladly put back into their hands.

Dr. Upham consented to resume his duties if his health should permit; but the fatigue consequent upon the first Sunday's labors proved that it was certainly not equal to it. He still hoped to be able to preach once a day, however, aided by a clergyman temporarily called in as an assistant. The repose that was felt throughout the church at this state of things must have been most flattering to Dr. Upham; his people seemed to think it impossible to do too much to make amends for their former error; and all his firmness and discretion were required to keep things from sliding back into their former places without too vigorous a bound, and thereby reflecting too strongly on his predecessor's course. The music, for instance, under the Rector's strict injunction, continued in the same hands as before. The fine organist, who was a terrible expense, having been engaged till spring, was still retained, and the class of boys was placed under the care of a sober-minded young student of divinity, without half Mr. Brockhulst's talents, but with a very good and plodding mind that suited exactly the vocation.

So the weeks went on, and the time for Christine's promised visit to town was come. She had received several rather flighty letters from Madeline, full of contradictions, extravagances, and sarcasms, and they only increased her dread of the ordeal. Madeline described the life they led as very gay, an exaggeration of all the doings at the Hill—some excitement every evening, dinner-party, opera, or theatre; and what would it be after the season had begun? Colonel Steele was a great deal at the house, besides all the others who were in the habit of coming to the Hill.

"Many inquiries after you, my dear; I'm afraid they'll turn your head with compliments when you come down."

Christine had done everything she could to escape the chance of having her head turned; but Dr. Upham, fancying

that her reluctance came from leaving him alone, insisted with unusual warmth upon the plan, and she had no sufficient excuse to offer for refusing to keep the promise that he had made for her.

It was a soft, hazy November afternoon ; the sky was a faint grey, the air was mild, the wind was still. Christine left Crescens still busy with her trunk for the journey of to-morrow, and throwing her cloak around her, went out for a half-hour of quiet in the garden. She went slowly down the long covered walk, now strewn thickly with the dead leaves which rustled as she moved along ; the vines above were almost bare of foliage, but a few bunches of grapes still hanging on them scented the air deliciously. The grass-plot looked sere and yellow, the shrubbery was nearly leafless, the flower-beds were tangled and overgrown, and covered with dead leaves ; by the path some artemisias and other late flowers bloomed, but the end of the year's luxuriance and verdure was stamped upon the garden ; the soft, mild atmosphere could not deceive.

Christine sighed as she thought of the departed summer and its many pleasures. She felt as if it had been all the youth that she should ever know ; with its close had come a knowledge, an awakening, that matured her in an instant.

"Duty must be life's leading star,
And conscious innocence its rest."

She stopped at the end of the long walk beside the drooping tree, with the circular bench around its trunk, that in the early summer had been such a thick and cool green bower, now naked and leafless and dreary, and a verse of Keble's came mournfully across her mind :

"And if the world seem dull and dry ;
If long and sad thy lonely hours,
And winds have rent thy sheltering bowers—
Bethink thee what thou art and where
A sinner in a life of care."

She stood with her hand upon the branch nearest to her, and looked into the leafless bower with a sad remembrance of the happy hours that she had spent dreaming in it when the summer was yet young. Some one else was thinking of that time, too. Dr. Catherwood, coming down that moment from her father's room, paused at the open door and looked out into the garden with a thoughtful, almost a stern face, that softened and then darkened again as he caught sight of the figure at the end of the long walk. He thought of that "all golden afternoon" when he had smoked his fragrant indolent cigar under the shade of the now leafless tree, reading "Evangeline," with the mignonette between its pages, and thinking of the lovely child who presently, like a dream, had come fluttering down the path to him. He thought of her girlish eagerness, with her first note of invitation open in her hand—of the simplicity he smiled at then, the misgivings that seemed prophetic now. He had felt that note was the first step in the separation that must surely come between them. It had given him the first warning that his pleasant intercourse with her must some time end—that the too charming and unconventional hours he passed at the Parsonage were numbered. All this had been fulfilled. The summer had brought all the changes in their relative positions that he feared. But in one thing he had been mistaken. In one thing Christine had been wiser than he. The world had not hurt her. Flattery had not touched her heart. She had ripened rapidly; she was a woman now, where five months ago she had been but a child. Life had matured her, but had not changed her nature. His pretty violet breathed still the same sweet woody perfume as when the moss imbedded it and the budding forest-trees hung their fresh shade above it.

He looked down the walk and started forward as if he must yield to the impulse to go to her, then checked himself and half-turned away. What a contrast was this to the face and

figure that he remembered so well in that early summer sunset. As great a contrast as between that day of rosy, living June, and this of dead, grey, still November. The change had not come unperceived to him. He had watched the shadow stealing into her eyes, the color fading from her cheek, but it seemed to come more fully to him now in its entirety as she stood silent and motionless where then she had stood trembling with young life and happiness.

He turned back into the house and crossed the hall. She was going to-morrow. When she came back she might be even further from him than she was now; he would go and speak to her one moment: perhaps he would say to her what her father had asked him to say—discover from her if she looked favorably upon this suitor who seemed to have distanced all the others and to have won for himself some sort of a place with her. So he turned back towards the garden—it was not often that he wavered so—went down the steps into the path, and approached her slowly.

She did not hear till the leaves at her feet rustled, and turning, she saw him standing by her. She changed color slightly as he held out his hand.

"So you are going away to-morrow," he said, resting his hand upon the rough heavy stem of the vine above him. "I thought Mrs. Sherman would get you after all."

She merely smiled faintly; a month ago she would have told him she did not want to go, but that her father had insisted. Times of confidence were over now.

"Miss Madeline has seduced you with her accounts of the gay doings, I suppose," he went on.

"Madeline seems to be enjoying herself very much," Christine answered, and then turned towards the house. He walked down the path beside her, and as they neared the steps, he said—

"Do not go in yet. Let us walk here awhile; it is gloomy in the house."

"It is gloomy here, I think," she said, as in turning to retrace their steps, her eyes wandered over the desolate garden and fell upon the naked leafless bower. Tears involuntarily rushed into them as she thought of the summer's past delights, the coming separation, the abiding grief.

"You are too young to find autumn gloomy," said her companion, seeing the tears she turned her head away to hide.

"I am not any longer young," she had it on her lips to say, but she did not speak.

"You have so much pleasure before you in your life, I hope," he went on, "you need not regret the passing of one pleasant summer. It is only when the pleasant summers lie all in the past, and all that is to come is winter, that one has a right to talk of gloom."

Christine was silent, and he went on presently in a more cheerful tone.

"Your winter, I am sure, promises to be gayer even than your summer. Mrs. Clybourne only yesterday was giving me a short *resumé* of all that has been going on, and a sort of programme of all that was projected for the ensuing month."

"Those things give Madeline more pleasure than they give me," she answered with simplicity.

"But they ought to give you pleasure," he persisted, "when you think how much is done on your account. Mrs. Sherman and Col. Steele both desire, above all things, you know, to make you happy."

There was unconsciously to himself a slight sarcastic coldness in his voice as he said this; at Col. Steele's name a warm color flushed over his companion's face, which his eye caught instantly, and his tone did not alter for the better as he continued:

"I am unreasonable, Christine, perhaps, but, as an old friend, I have been trying to persuade myself I have some sort of a right to ask you about Col. Steele—whether he satisfies

you completely, and whether you mean to give him the happiness that a great many men will be seeking by and by, if they have not already sought it. You are very young, Christine, to make up your mind about such a step as this. I wish I knew you were not in danger of deceiving yourself about your feelings in the matter."

"Dr. Catherwood," said his companion, pausing and turning towards him as they reached the end of the walk again, "I have something to say to you that will change your fear for me. I am not in danger of deceiving myself about my feelings for Col. Steele nor for any one else. Whatever might be my feelings towards any one who desired to marry me, I could have but one decision, could make but one irrevocable answer."

"I do not understand you," he said slowly, raising his eyes and fixing them upon her.

"I mean," she said, speaking in a voice whose agitation grew with every word she spoke, "I mean that I shall never marry; that I am bound by the most solemn oath with which one can bind one's soul, to live unmarried; that love, real or fancied, has nothing to do with the fate I have before me. If I loved with my entire soul, I could not marry; if affection and duty and authority all combined to urge it, I would die before I broke my vow. Now, you know why the world ought not to be my pleasure; why I am marked out and different from others: why it is my duty never to think of things that other women think of."

"Christine!" he exclaimed, in a low tone, while his lips grew white, "you must explain this to me. I do not know of what you talk."

"I talk of something of which I hate to think," she said with a shudder; "something that I never yet have told to any one. I meant to have told you long before, when I told you about Julian, but I could not bear to speak of it--I could not bring

myself to put it into words. You ought to know. Perhaps everybody ought to know ; but I do not want to have to tell."

She shivered and put her hands for a moment over her face, then resolutely conquering her voice, she raised her head, and leaning against the grape vine, went on speaking rapidly though low, with her eyes on the ground and her head verted.

"I told you what I promised to Helena about Julian : besides that, she made me promise something else. It was only an hour before she died ; she looked so dreadfully, and the room was so dim and so solemn. I was a little girl then, and everything solemn frightened me ; and she sent the nurse away and I was alone with her. She told me about Julian and about his wicked father ; and she made me promise on my knees, solemnly and in the sight of God, I would never marry to lead a wretched life like her, but would live for Julian, and would be a mother to him, and to him only, while he lived."

There was a silence. Christine did not look up ; but, if she had, she would have seen upon her companion's face a pallor that would have terrified her.

After a few moments, she went on :

"At first, I did not think much about that part of the promise ; but since I have been grown up I have seen that it was a little hard upon me, and that circumstances might arise that would make it very cruel."

The way in which she said the words *very cruel* was inexpressibly pathetic : she said them half involuntarily, as if she were trying not to blame her sister even in thought, but as if the deep sigh of her heart had breathed itself out in words against her will.

"Cruel !" repeated her companion after a moment, in a voice so low and deep and vehement, that she started and looked towards him in alarm. "Cruel ! The deep damnation of such

an act as that; the appalling thought of such a selfishness! Christine, it binds you no more than the wild curse of a maniac—it does not touch your soul, poor baby that you were. It is as worthless as the brawling of the storm. It leaves you free as air.”

“I bound myself,” she answered. “That was not Helena’s act; no one can undo it—no one can persuade me: I made the vow myself. I made it and I must keep it, if it breaks my heart.”

“You shall not keep it,” he said below his breath, with a fierce vehemence of eye. “I will live to see it broken. I will undo that treacherous woman’s sin before I die. I will save you from her tyranny. I will unloose the hold she has upon you with her cold dead cruel hands. She has blighted enough lives. She shall not turn yours, too, to bitterness, my lamb. You shall not drag out your years in misery for my——”

He struck his hand upon his forehead and turned away with vehement emotion.

“I hardly know what I have been saying,” he resumed in a more controlled tone presently. “I feel this cruelty, this injustice to you, bitterly, Christine, and I would do anything to remedy what has been done against you. I want you to listen to me, and believe me when I say, truly, as a Christian man, I do not think this promise binds you. It was extorted from you under circumstances of peculiar trial, when you were a mere child; a mere child in years and judgment—no one but a lunatic would think of valuing such a promise. Your father would be perfectly right in forcing you to disregard it.”

“My father would never force me to a sin as black as that, he *could* not force me to it, for my promise to the dead, made in the name of heaven, comes before any duty to the living. Dr. Catherwood, you are saying a great many things that I do not like to hear. You are only driving me away from you by

talking so. You do not respect me much if you think to move me. I am as firm as if I were a great deal older, and wiser and better than I am. Because you have seen me weak so often, and because I have been guided by you in so many things, you think that I am childish and unstable. I shall be sorry that I told you this. I never have told any one before. Does it look very childish that I have kept it to myself so long? I would have kept it to myself for life if I had not trusted you so much."

"Christine! forgive me," said her companion, tenderly. "It was for your sake that I spoke as plainly as I did. I hoped to prove to you, you were mistaken in your duty. I pray God I may yet be able to convince you that you are. It seems to me impossible that in time I cannot make you see it in the way I do."

"You cannot," she answered; "I was fourteen years old when I made that promise. I was more thoughtful and reliable than most children of that age. I knew what I was doing, and I did it with intention. Not one month before, I had taken my confirmation vows. I was thought old enough for that. I took this in the same spirit, with consciousness of the same awful presence. Do not try to convince me of what your own heart cannot be convinced. The faithful keeping of this promise has become the intention of my life. If I broke it now, I would be breaking the added resolutions of all the days that have passed since it was made. Do not, if you are indeed my friend, add any to the weight I have to bear. Forget what I have told you. Never breathe it to my father, for you violate my confidence if you do. Do not speak of it again to me, and forget it if you can yourself."

"If I can," he repeated under his breath, then turning to her in a pleading way, he said: "Dear Christine! let me say this to you, let me remind you of one thing. By keeping religiously the letter of the promise, you make suffering for others be-

sides yourself. By keeping the spirit of it, you can satisfy your own conscience, and serve Julian as well."

"And affront heaven with a lie. No, Dr. Catherwood, you cannot make me do that wickedness. I know God will not let me fall so terribly. I am sure of strength, I think."

"Listen, Christine. You are looking at this only in a morbid way. You have kept it a dark secret in your heart so long, you do not know how it looks by daylight. Let me tell you how it looks to me—to me—a man mature in years, temperate in judgment, by the grace of God, a Christian."

"No, Dr. Catherwood, do not tell me. I know all that you would say, but my mind cannot change. You must not talk to me about it."

"But, Christine, think of this. I know your father's dearest earthly wish is to see you married safely before he is called to leave you."

"My father will trust me when I tell him I am safer without being married," she returned quickly, and with a change of tone. That sentence of her companion's brought back memory of painful times.

"Yes, he may submit, but he will be pained and disappointed. I know how great a dread it is to him to leave you unprotected."

"God, perhaps, will leave him longer than you think; and after that, duty is my best protection."

"But he will not see it so; you will inflict a pang on him, and on the—the man whose happiness depends upon your love, Christine."

"There is no one whose happiness depends on that," she returned. "The man the world has chosen for me, Dr. Catherwood, would never have my love, even if I were at liberty to marry him."

"Then you do not love this Colonel Steele?" he said, fixing a sudden and piercing glance upon her face.

"You know I do not," she exclaimed almost bitterly, turning suddenly to leave him. He caught her hand and drew her back.

"Christine!" he said, in a low, smothered voice. "Look at me! Honestly—and tell me from your heart—if there is no one else for whom you repent you made that vow?"

She had started to leave him, but he held her hand, and she turned her face around and their eyes met; one moment, the only one in life, fate said, in which they might look into each other's eyes and read the truth; one long, long draught of love from the depths of each other's souls.

If any other love tale and any other fate had been Christine's, she would have listened with downcast eyes, with trembling blushes, with averted face; but now, despairing, yearning, tearless, she lifted her head and gazed with deep, passionate, loving eyes, into eyes as deep, as loving, more passionate than hers. O the desolate garden! The still, grey, mournful sky! The falling faded leaves! What a strange pair of lovers stood in the midst of that silent gloom, despairing, dumb. Knowing for the first time the full bliss of loving; knowing at the same time the certainty of parting; the cup just at their lips to be struck aside—

"Like water spilled upon the plain
Not to be gathered up again."

The whole capacity of their souls for happiness, the whole satisfaction of each in the other's love, the future that had been possible, the desolation that was now inevitable—all these, with all their contingent and attendant circumstances, with all their wealth of light, and depth of shade, crowded and filled the moments that they stood thus hand in hand under the mournful autumn sky.

The acknowledgment of a passion is in one sense its birth; till it has been spoken, it is not full, living, real; this passion, as it woke to life, dealt death to those in whose hearts it was

born. A perfect love, a true marriage of souls, thwarted and blasted and denied for ever its completion. No wonder that, man and woman loving thus, thus joined by God in soul, they felt in all its strength the cruelty and malice of the human selfishness that had put them asunder for their earthly lives.

"There is no hope," Christine said at last, in a low, unnatural dead voice. Her companion did not speak, did not attempt any sort of a rejoinder. At that moment the shrill tones of a child reached them from the house, calling petulantly her name.

"I must go," she said; he shivered as the child's voice met his ear, and unclasping her hand, without a word let her go from him. He did not even watch her till she disappeared into the house; he turned away, and stood dumb and motionless with his eyes upon the ground.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HELENA'S WORK.

" Shall I not weep, my heartstrings torn,
My flower of love that falls half blown,
My youth uncrowned, my life forlorn,
A thorny path to walk alone!"

HOLMES.

CHRISTINE went directly up the stairs, and past the room where Julian was calling for her petulantly. For the first time in her life she did not answer him, did not hurry to find out his demand, but went towards her own room, and shut herself in, and then threw herself upon the bed, with an audible cry of wretchedness. She clasped her hands above her forehead—unclasped them, rose, and walked about the room.

The room began to feel to her like a prison, and she opened the window and knelt down by it, and leaned her head forward to catch the air. But the pine-trees before the house grew close up against the window, and still she felt that she should smother. Oh, what had she done to deserve this! Why was she born to such a fate? Why had she not died like the other children, who lay so still and safe there in the churchyard? Not like her to live to be old, and grey, and dull, to live years and years in a misery that never would grow old. Not like her to hate life as she looked ahead, to hate life as she looked back. Not like her to feel a bitter reproach against the dead, a yearning, hopeless love towards the living, who to her must be for ever dead.

O cruel sister—O selfish mother's love to which she had been sacrificed. Helena's livid, ghastly face rose up before her

and she reproached it in her misery, defied it in her despair. She had often wondered, as she used to watch long silent nights by Julian's bed, whether Helena knew, whether the spirit of the mother was not near her, blessing her for keeping faith with her, watching with her by her child's sick bed. She wondered now if she were near; she felt the air close and thick and heavy, as the dusk came on, and she shivered with the thought that her spirit might be even now within hearing of her broken words, within touch of her throbbing, feverish brow. She hoped she was there—seeing the wreck she had made, knowing the blight her cruelty had brought. She had no right to be sleeping calm and still, while she, the little girl upon whom she had laid her monstrous burden, was struggling and fainting, and gasping beneath its weight. Oh, she had done a base thing to her motherless little sister! She had bade her keep it a secret from her father; she had done well; what would his generous nature not have felt at such a selfish act! Oh, she prayed God Helena might know—might feel—might see; quick and dead were alike to her to-night, head and heart burning up in the tortures of her new agony. She could not fear the dead, for she longed for death itself, she craved it passionately. She did not see how she possibly could live and bear this pain. But she knew that she should, and that made it what it was.

Life as it would be to her, and life as it might have been! Her innocent and pure mind had never, till that moment of awakening, pictured to itself the happiness of married love, the only earthly happiness that is worth the name. It seemed as if earth had suddenly flowered into a paradise, and then the gates had been shut upon her, and she had been left, dreary and alone, in the waste without. A thousand powers of love, a thousand new perceptions, new emotions awoke within her, to turn now only to her further pain. Before, she had only half-lived—half-understood herself—half-known the things about

her; now, this strange necromancy had struck the scaffolding away, and all things stood revealed. Behold the mysteries of her nature! Behold its infinite capacity for happiness—its infinite capacity for suffering! If she had never known the possibility of this bliss; if her whole nature had not been so suddenly developed, she might have passed on through her appointed years unjoyously but unrepiningly, with the simplicity of childhood and the patience of faith, not knowing that a great wrong had been done her; a deep cruelty; a shameful injustice.

And not only to her, but to the one whose love for her was as much a part of his life, his existence, as hers was for him. What he suffered! Every pang was doubled at the thought of him, as every joy would have been doubled if joy had been their destiny. For herself she felt agony; for him she felt rebellion. What had he done to be sacrificed to this selfish mother—he, a stranger, bound to her in no earthly way? Then she thought of how Helena had injured her child by her selfish, avaricious, greedy requisitions. She pictured to herself the home in which he would have been guarded and cherished; the manly gentleness and judgment by which his course would have been directed; the strong arm by which his youth would have been protected. Now, he had lost all that. What could he be but an object of aversion to the one in whose path of happiness he stood? What would his future be, with only her guidance and protection? Already he was beyond her control; already she felt her weakness and insufficiency; and if they said truly, even the help her father gave her must soon be gone.

The money for which she had been so exacting, could do them both little good when there was no one to take care of it. A lawless boy, with reckless habits, and the knowledge that he had a right to money, what could there be to save him from destruction? Oh, the life that she saw stretching before her along the desolate, aimless years—cold, grey, cheerless—charge

coming upon all but her—her young companions with babies in their arms, with happy fireside interests, with love to lighten duty; Julian growing up out of her reach—careless of her affection; her father gone; her home desolate and lonely; her life a long regret, a smothered, unquenched, smouldering rebellion.

She passed through years of suffering as she lay there alone in the thick, dull twilight, pressing her hot hands against her burning forehead, and moaning aloud sometimes in her intolerable pain. Through the darkness and the stillness of the house, at last she heard her father's voice calling to her from across the hall. For the first time in her life, she heard that summons with impatience and answered it with tardy and unwilling steps. She arose slowly, and pushing back her hair, exclaimed, with reluctant despair: "O heavens! cannot they let me alone to-night!"

She felt, as she washed the tears off from her cheeks, smoothed her dress, and opening her door, went out into the light, that she had taken her first step in the long journey that lay before her, hiding the anguish of her soul, and for duty and for pride wearing on her face a serenity that would deceive.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ONLY A MONTH.

"Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live."

COLERIDGE.

AFTER Christine had gone away to the city, Dr. Catherwood did not come near the Parsonage for several days: then he was sent for on some plea of illness in the household, and after that he came every day, and stayed long, and left with a homesick, heartsick regret each time. It was an effort to him to go when he was first obliged to, after his parting with Christine: he dreaded acutely going into the house again; but that once over, he found his greatest consolation there. He would spend hours in Dr. Upham's room; then coming down, he would go into the parlor—walk through the room where everything recalled her—open her books, and glance through them for some trace of her in them, lift the lid of her work-box, touch the work that had passed through her hands, and look long and hungrily upon the little picture of her that hung beneath her mother's; a mere sketch, a soft shadow, a sweet thought of Christine, but inestimably precious. To not even that had he a claim. That little picture, hanging there obscurely month after month, attracting the eyes and thoughts of no one in the household probably, of interest to no one, of value only in a possible extremity, even that he could not ask for; even that he must count the moments of looking at without betraying feeling. His course he had not yet decided on: at first he had felt he had strength for nothing but to go away from her; he felt it

would be impossible for him to live near her and not make her wretched, and he loved her too generously to be willing to sacrifice her peace to his craving desire to look upon her face and touch her hand sometimes. He felt that for himself there was nothing but gloom ahead—but for her, with her youth, her sweetness of heart, her marvellous religious faith, there might be a future of peace and satisfaction. So at first he meant to go—to separate himself for ever from her,—to meet her eyes never again on earth; to trouble her peace no more. To pray and make the prayer honest by his efforts, that she might forget him and be contented with her lot.

But longer thought and more complicated reasoning brought him nearly to an opposite conclusion, and it was a long while before he knew whether he were listening to reason or yielding to a selfish and tempting love. How could he leave her, he reasoned, so unprotected, in such a trying life? Her father he watched with secret and growing apprehension: his active life was ended; he might linger a helpless invalid for years, or his death might occur at any moment. Julian was a charge to which he was unequal now—the care of his property would soon have to pass into other hands: upon his young daughter would come the heavy weight of both, and the insufficiency of her strength for either seemed to him an honest reason for staying where he could relieve her of them, and make her path an easier one. These doubts and waverings tormented him, a man used to clear and rapid habits of thought, and definite in all his plans. An illness that Julian had while Christine was still away, settled the misgivings, and he resolved to stay. He was certain he comprehended the boy's ailments as no one else did, and as no one else could, could relieve Christine's mind of the alarm she always felt about him. A sentence in her letter to her father written after hearing that he had been ill, settled his mind about it:

“I could not stay here as I do, but for your assurance that

Dr. Catherwood is constantly with Julian, and apprehends nothing worse. While he is with him, I am willing to do as you ask me to, and prolong my absence."

Christine's absence was prolonged a month; her father, lonely as he would have been without Dr. Catherwood, still urged her staying, and felt great satisfaction in the thought that she was happy. But his satisfaction lasted only till he saw her. Not very apt to study the faces of those around him, he could not help being struck with the change in his daughter's. She was not the same Christine who had gone away from him, he was sure; and he watched her with a tender solicitude, while she struggled bravely to keep up a cheerful manner.

But it was like a fresh wound, to come back to her quiet unchanged home again, and to know that the long journey was only shorter by one month than when she went away. She had passed through such interminably long days since then, had had such terrible experience in trying to make the conquest of herself, that she was utterly disheartened to find herself no further advanced in any way. She missed the excitement of city life, which, though thoroughly distasteful to her, had been a stimulant; and without it, she found she had no strength at all. The stillness of the house, the length of the uneventful hours, the monotony of the slowly rolling days,—was it possible she could live and bear them. The care of Julian, and her attendance on her father, seemed no help in those early days of her untoward fate. She could put no heart in what she did, and hers was a nature that though capable of great sacrifices for duty, was weak and lifeless when working only for that cold task-master.

Besides, the blow had fallen on body as well as on mind she was literally only half alive. Mrs. Sherman had been glad to send her home at last, for she felt she was on the eve of some alarming illness. The excitement of getting home kept her up for a day or two: then a feverish flush on her cheeks

at night gave place to a ghastly white in the morning, and Dr. Upham took alarm.

It was the fourth day of her return to —: through the morning she had been with him in his study; but after dinner she had excused herself and gone away to her own room. Five o'clock came, and Christine had not come to him, and, a good deal disturbed by her unnatural appearance in the morning, her father concluded to go to her room and see how she was feeling. It was only across the hall, on the front side of the house. But it was some weeks since the old man had been beyond his own apartment, and he wrapped his dressing-gown about him and went out with a cautious step into the dim and chilly hall. Christine's door was standing ajar; he pushed it softly open and entered. She lay upon the bed, with her face upon her arms, a burning flush on her cheeks, and a troubled dark look in her eyes.

"Christine, my child," he said gently, standing before her; and when she saw him she gave a violent start and tried to sit up.

"Christine, you are ill; you make me quite uneasy. What is the matter with you?"

She tried to answer him in a reassuring way, but sank back on the pillow faint and dizzy from her effort. He put his hand on her forehead, and without waiting for any further answer, started towards the door, saying half aloud, "I should have sent for him this morning."

"Father," cried Christine, starting up in fright; but her voice was too weak: he had reached the door before she could command strength enough to arrest his attention. She attempted to rise and follow him; but the hurry, the agitation, were too much for her, and she fell back on the bed, breathless and palpitating. She heard her father call to Ann, heard Ann's light step down the stairs, the closing of the door, and the message to Dr. Catherwood was on its way.

How should she meet him! Oh, what a cruel mistake her father was making! This was enough to drive her into an illness if she were not ill already. The hot fever seemed rushing through her veins with double fire; the beating of her heart sounded so loud to her, she could hear nothing else. In a little while—it might have been half an hour, it might have been five minutes—Crescens came in softly with a light, and shading it, placed it on a table in the furthest corner. As she was going out, Christine motioned to her not to go away. The woman raised her sulky eyebrows as she moved slowly across the room, and taking out her work sat down by the shaded light. Christine hardly knew why she wanted her to stay, only she was terrified at herself—she dared not be alone when he came—she could not trust herself or him. Oh, she hoped he would not come; she had never seen him since that day; she was so miserable, she could not bear the meeting now. Perhaps he would refuse to come—would feel as she did, and know what she was suffering from.

But no. By and by came Ann's step into the hall, followed in a moment more by a quicker one that she knew as well upon the walk outside, and then the opening and shutting of the door. Christine listened to the footsteps on the stair, their pause at the study door, the long parley between her father and the new comer; and then she knew that he was coming in alone. The room was very dim. The low lamp with its thick shade made it almost twilight where the bed stood, with its white curtain swept back, and its pillows crushed and disarranged by the feverish aching head that had tossed about upon them. There were queer shadows on the ceiling; Crescens with her back to the door, looked, reflected dimly on it, like a giantess stooping over her pile of work.

Dr. Catherwood paused a moment in the open door then entering, quietly went up to the bed, and laid his hand upon Christine's. For the moment of suspense before he spoke, she

neither saw nor comprehended. She felt that he was there, but turmoil was in her brain, a giddy rushing in her pulses. But when he spoke, there was something in his even quiet voice that cut through the mists like a steady stream of light, that made a terra firma for her to stand upon. It is impossible to describe all that that tone expressed—it told of a battle fought and gained, of a course decided on, a place for both of them, a new life inaugurated, a quiet putting down of passion and taking up of fate. She felt that she had to do nothing but follow; that he had resolved what was best for them both, and that she need only obey his lead. She need no more harass her poor mind with the choice of paths before her; he had mastered himself and all the difficulties of their relations, and would walk on before her silently and with authority. All this his voice expressed—a voice as steady and firm as if emotion had never shaken it, as if a heart of fire were not burning beneath it, a soul of yearning tenderness were not throbbing tumultuously against it. But no accent, no tremble of what was within, found expression through it; not the faintest vibration of the tempest shook it. He sat down beside her, with his cool steady hand on hers, and said:

“I am afraid you are really ill. Why did you not send for me before? Your pulse is altogether wrong.”

She gave a sigh of relief and turned her face towards the light.

“You have a good deal of fever,” he went on, “and should have given up long ago. I want you now to keep perfectly quiet. I will give Crescens all directions about your medicine, so do not trouble yourself to think at all. Let her undress you now. I am going into your father’s room, and if you are not comfortable and likely to sleep, before bed-time she will let me know.”

“Very well,” she answered simply, without looking towards him, and with a few words more, he rose and went over to Crescens.

Christine watched him as he stood by the dim light, talking with the woman in a tone too low for her to hear. She felt no longer agitation and alarm; a great weight was gone from her mind. She felt not the least care of herself or the least anxiety about the future. Her brain felt dull and heavy, but her heart beat even and slow, and she only thought of rest and sleep. If the hand upon her wrist had had the least tremble in it, the work he was trying to do would have been undone, and fatally undone perhaps. But he was a strong man, and had himself well in hand. Not one of all the household guessed, through the long weeks of suspense that followed that night, that their anxiety, compared with his, was but a trifling and unmeaning sentiment; that his whole life lay in the chances of which he talked so coolly; that night and day he had no rest from the gnawing agony, till the shadow of death passed away from the still face in that dark room, and the warm life crept slowly back into the chilly faint pulses he had counted and weighed his hopes upon so long.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MADELINE AND CHRISTINE.

"I am half sick of shadows, said
The Lady of Shalott."

TENNYSON

"O who can dare complain
When God sends a new duty,
To comfort each new pain?"

A. PROCTOR.

THREE years and a half have passed since then, and the Parsonage garden is again in bloom, the hawthorn is again shedding its blossoms down on Christine's head as she walks there alone, the birds are merry in every branch, the air is full of the smell of the early flowers of summer, and "all is vernal rapture as of old."

Not quite as of old, though, it all seemed and sounded to Christine. The songs of the birds sometimes "minded her o' the happy days" too much to make them very merry; the sight and smell of the returning flowers gave her no longer a thrill of young delight, only a soft and quiet sense of pleasure. The garden, with its old-fashioned beds, its sheltered walks, was more to her now than it had ever been; it was quieter than the house; no one came there but herself and the old gardener. Julian never set his foot in it; he was far beyond boyhood and playtime now, and spent as little of his time at home as he could decently arrange. The Rector was never out of the house in these days, rarely out of his study; so Christine had the garden to herself.

She was walking there, this afternoon, with a thoughtful

face, up and down slowly in the shade, sometimes reading, sometimes looking far off at vacancy. She was dressed in white, as she used to dress, with the same delicacy, the same grace of style. But if her beauty had depended on her youth, it would have been gone now. She looked more than three years older; she had almost lost the peculiar roundness and freshness of girlhood; few people would have noticed her now for her beauty, though the best part of it still remained to her. There was not a shadow of discontent about her face, not one bitter and impatient thought had left its trace behind, only there was a deep thoughtfulness always, a wistful regret sometimes. She seemed almost painfully mature for one but little over twenty; people looked twice, and wondered what her actual age was.

But in her life there was not much time left for repining and regret. Quiet as it was, it was strong, with motives and objects. She had an intention, and she was living it out. Julian first of all; then her father, then herself. For Julian she was living, and every day brought its disappointment, but she did not give up. The care of her father was a sweet care, and his tenderness repaid her doubly every day. For herself, she had taken the inward resolution, which so few women ever take, of making the most of her mind, perfecting and developing it as much as possible. She had been driven to this, because she saw what life was before her, and recognised the necessity of having as many resources in it as possible. Many women waste fine powers of mind, because they have no definite life for which to prepare themselves; they do not know what is going to be required of them; nobody talks to them of their minds after they leave school; it is all wonder and excitement then, waiting for the turn of the wheel that is to dispose of them; the precious moments go by, the desire for improvement is weakened, all steady pursuits are interrupted, and frivolity of purpose is succeeded by discontent and a craving for excitement. And

women go dragging through lives, in which they have need of all their strength, only half developed; creatures of emotion, and not creatures of reason, fit companions neither for themselves, if the wheel of fortune has nothing for them, nor for the men who choose them for their pretty faces. It is a startling thought, how little we use of what is given to us, how grossly we see through eyes we might refine to keenest delicacy; how weakly we grasp at what effort would place within our reach, how much beauty goes unnoticed, how much happiness lies untouched, what wonders lie unread, what strength sleeps unexerted. Childhood reigns dark in the mind; circumstances develop the heart, and the heart suffers without its help and strength: suffers, sometimes, for errors of judgment and ill-devised plans of life, which its proper cultivation could have completely obviated.

And Christine had learned to find pleasure and strength in study, after the keenness of her sorrow had passed away. She had studied, first, to make herself companionable to Julian, and to assist him in his detested lessons, and afterwards she had gone on for her own sake when she discovered what a strength and solace it became. Her desire for self-improvement was an astonishment and pleasure to her father; he was never tired of watching the progress that she made. And now that all the duties of mistress of the house came upon her, she needed to be very much matured.

The Parsonage had always been an hospitable house. Not only the clergy, but many of her father's early friends, men in high position and of extended information, from neighboring cities, visited intimately there. Intercourse with men of information and cultivation was very improving to her; having no coquetry or desire for admiration, she was able to profit in the fullest manner by what they said, and entered into conversation with men of all ages with an unembarrassed grace and simplicity that is very rare among women of her years. The result

was, she received a homage the most delicate and flattering; she became the admired companion of her father's older friends—the truest and most elevating influence of the younger men whom sometimes she met. She was so peculiarly womanly, so pure-minded, so simple, and yet so appreciative, she was like a revelation to many of them, used principally to women thinking about themselves. More than one loved her with more than friendship—but a hopeless love for such a woman is better than the heart of an inferior one.

And “the little Upham girl,” frightened and pale and fluttering only a few years ago, was fast becoming an influence in the parish. She was taking the place that her poor mother left vacant by her early death so long ago. She was winning the hearts of all; and by her fine tact and admirable judgment, was bringing order slowly and imperceptibly out of the wild confusion in which the parish had been plunged by Mrs. Sherman's interference. She had more system than most of the older women, and much more quiet sense than any of the younger ones; and without their knowing anything about it, and hardly knowing it herself, she was doing them a vast deal of good, and making a revolution in St. Philip's. All this without the least appearance of authority or prominence, and without creating a suspicion in the minds of the most critical, that she had any claims at all to being “a superior woman.” She did not parade her bookish tastes, nor her clear views about parish matters. She listened very deferentially to her seniors, who liked her for her respectful manner, and acted on her suggestions without knowing to whom they were indebted for them.

This pleasant June afternoon, as she walked up and down the shady path, she was reading a very learned book in a very learned language, and she gave a little start when she heard her name called from the house, and saw some one coming down the steps, and threw the book upon the seat below the grape vine. She was a little ashamed of it, it must be confessed,

for it was a new attempt, quite a launch, in fact, upon the ocean of letters, and she was somewhat doubtful whether she had any right to go so far from shore. She turned towards the intruder with a little flush on her cheek, and gave a cry of pleasure when she saw that it was Madeline. The two young women ran to meet each other with the enthusiasm of their sex, and kissed each other several times before anything sensible was said.

"When did you come?" at last Christine asked, as her friend held her off for a moment to look at her, and see what ravages had been made by time during the six months which had elapsed since they had seen each other.

"This morning," said Madeline. "I left mother in the midst of the unpacking, and came over to see you to get a little rest. I have all the summer before me to unpack. What is the use of rushing into it at once! But, Christine, how well you look! Pretty, if I may be permitted to be candid, and younger by two years than I do. This city life is wearing me out, my dear. I do not feel worth anything when I come home in the spring. Every year I resolve I'll stay at home a winter and try to knit up the ravelled sleeve! But, so it goes. I get so tired of the country before autumn, not all the king's horses, nor all the king's men, could keep me in it through the winter. It's a wonderful thing for the complexion; you look like a clear white rose, but rather thin, Christine. Dear, dear!" holding up her hand, "so clear and transparent of hue you might have seen the moon shine through."

"It would need to be a vigorous moon," said Christine, putting her hand out of sight under her friend's. "Tell me what sort of a winter you have had, and what has happened to you."

"Nothing has happened," she replied in a tone of ennui, "that makes the winter pleasant to remember. The same people, the same routine, gaiety repeated till it is dulness, excitement multiplied till it is tameness. But do not talk about

it ; I told you I came here to be rested, and to hear of something different. How is your father—how are the parish children—what have you been reading ? Christine, sometimes I think the happiest and healthiest hours of my life are those I spend with you in this dear old house. I think of them in town, sometimes, and they rest me even to remember."

Christine had the tact not to read her friend a lecture in her present mood, so she gave her hand a little caress at these last words, and began in a pleasant, piquant way, to sketch out home affairs. She felt even more tenderness than usual for Madeline, for she saw an exaggeration of the ordinary discontent and restlessness with which she came back from town.

Madeline was not happy : people said that who saw her in society ; her heart was empty ; her time filled only with frivolity ; her mind wasted upon trifles, of which she felt the insignificance. The lord of her heart had not come ; society was full of men as tired of it as she was herself. They flirted with her to excite themselves and consume the time, and she accepted their devotion ; because devotion she must have, and there was no one else to give it. There were very few marrying men in the fashionable world just then ; the few there were, were kept away by those by whom she was surrounded, and who gave her the appearance of being undignified and easily amused. Madeline despised the men with whom she talked and danced and rode. She felt herself superior to them ; and in the familiar intercourse of daily meetings, she grew accustomed to treating them with an ease and carelessness that injured her with the more refined and exacting part of the world. The men themselves knew that she felt no regard for them, and that they would have been terribly punished if they had gone beyond the limits that she set them ; but her carelessness and indifference made her less attractive in their eyes, and they sought her principally because she was handsome and danced well, and was clever enough to save them the effort of sustaining conversation.

They knew that she endured them because she was tenacious of her reputation as a belle, and because their attentions were necessary to her; and she felt this, with a terrible injury to her self-respect, and with an impatience that was not always improving to her dignity of manner.

Many a night when she came home ennuyée and heart-sore, she cried out with bitter tears, that it was a life she hated; that if she did not get out of it, she should go mad. But there seemed no way to get out of it. Things at home were miserably entangled. Little by little the income of the year had been anticipated, till there were debts ahead. Raymond's habits were growing worse, and every year more was demanded to keep him from disgrace. Susie and her husband had got very much behindhand; their place was heavily mortgaged, and there was an apprehension every year that it would have to go, and that the whole seven would come upon the cottage. Madeline saw her mother was harassed and miserable; she felt the full burden of her cares and apprehensions, and she saw no way out of the entanglement; but the one which she was expected to open with her beauty and her cleverness.

Her beauty! She hated it, and she felt it going from her with a fierce disdain. It had done her no good—only led her into a false and trying situation. And her talents; she had better have been without them, and then she would not have rebelled so bitterly against her fate. She saw silly, simpering girls marrying advantageously every day, and she decided that a woman who is brought up to marry well had better have as little brain as will get her respectably through society. Madeline saw too far; felt too much; read the world too quickly; people did not love her for it. After the first draught, she lost her pleasure in society; for the society in which she moved was the most hollow and the least thoughtful in the great metropolis. She longed to shake off all connexion with it—to leave it for the quiet pleasures which Christine pursued. But

how could that be done? Never with her mother's sanction never without a struggle for which she had not the strength.

Sometimes, in her passionate moments, she resolved to do it, to save her self-respect and dignity, and to strive to solve the entanglements at home in some other way than the way for which she had been educated. But how? Madeline had very clear good, common-sense, and she counted over her resources with stinging self-contempt. There was her music; well, she knew just enough about music to be able to do nothing with it: she had been brilliantly and superficially taught, and had had need of all her talent to cover her want of actual knowledge. Then she had quixotic schemes for teaching, but they only lasted till she reflected that she knew nothing, and had no education worth the name, and that she lived in a country where clever New England girls, with well trained minds and well directed energies, were starving daily upon salaries that were insufficient even for their compact wants.

So, after all the tempests, often and often recurring, it came down to this, that she went back into the old life again with the shadow of the conflict darkening her face, and the tumult of it hardly quiet in her heart, to do the same things, to meet the same people, and to hope for the same result.

Raymond, never too delicate, was already beginning to say, Mad. had no time to lose. Many of her young companions were married; of them none had had the beauty and the promise that she had had; and none had more needed the advantages of a wealthy marriage. Mrs. Sherman, after all, had been of very little advantage to her; the particular people said, quite a disadvantage. Mrs. Sherman was very gay—very fashionable; everybody visited her, but everybody did not respect her. She had a reputation for match-making, which made most men afraid of her, and the better sort of young women shy of being considered on her staff. She always had

Madeline with her ; some severe persons said she had proposed her to every man in town. The sort of men whom she had about her were not the men who married handsome girls without anything in the way of money.

Col. Steele had been much the best of the lot, much more than an average specimen. He had now been married more than two years to a plain but sensible heiress, and was living in very good style upon her money, and now cut the Sherman clique entirely as too *prononcé* and dashing for a family man of his substantial claims. Sometimes he came up and talked to Madeline a little at parties, referring to "old times" in a patronizing way that enraged her and made her feel as if she were an octogenarian. He asked always about his pretty little friend, the minister's daughter, and wondered that she had "never married" in such a good-natured and indifferent manner, it quite shook Madeline's belief in his former devotion to her.

For the last two winters, the cottage had been shut up, and Mrs. Clybourne, feeling keenly all that depended on the campaign, had taken the field in person. She had attempted to withdraw Madeline quietly from Mrs. Sherman ; but, alas ! it was not easily done. She had already been classified in society, and no one would have forgotten that she had been in a fast set, if she had grown as tame as little Richfield herself. Besides, it was difficult to dispense with Mrs. Sherman's carriage and opera-box ; it was next to impossible to fight the battle without that brazen veteran to rally the scattering ranks. For younger girls were coming forward, and Madeline, now four years before the world, was not the star that she had been at seventeen. A wearing and exciting life had made serious inroads on her beauty, and at twenty-one she had no longer the look of freshness that belongs rightly to that age. She knew a great deal of the world—a great deal too much ; she knew little of politics, for she was not among men who cared for politics. Intellectually, she was re-

trograding, for she had lost the habit of study, and found it harder work than she had patience for, to regain what she had lost. She kept up with the easy essay literature of the day, and that was all. She felt always that she really knew nothing; and when in the society of men and women of higher and more cultivated tastes, she had recourse to a frivolous and sarcastic sort of conversation to keep them from sounding her on points she felt she was not capable of meeting.

And in her religious life she was prospering no better than in her intellectual life. Her first experience had shaken her confidence in herself; she had discovered her motives so mixed, her enthusiasm so ill-judged, she felt a disgust for herself and a dread of another self-deception. She never remembered the days when she had first believed in religion and duty and self-sacrifice, without remembering the folly and the disappointment that had succeeded them. She tried to obliterate them altogether, and to drown the shame of having been deceived in the pride of having proved herself superior in the end. She laughed at what her heart still yearned for; she envied those who could believe in what she had rendered herself incapable of believing.

She was unpopular among the people of — who had seen her grow up among them, and had felt a good deal of pride in her early beauty. Their society she found altogether too tame, and the only excitement she could get out of it was in the attempt to astonish them, and to provoke comment by her daring and unconventional manners. The mother saw all this, but she saw it too late. What Madeline was she had made her: great beauty, fine powers of mind, strong and tender feelings—all these materials she had had in her hands to work with, and here was the result that she had brought about. She tried to stifle these thoughts, and to convince herself that all was not lost. There was no such thing as turning back, and the only hope, she said, was in going forward and hardening herself against regret. Sometimes though, the thought could not be

kept back, that Madeline would have been happier if she had not been thwarted in that first unwise fancy of hers. The young clergyman had made a name for himself; and wiser and humbler and as earnest as at first, had earned a position that Madeline need not have blushed to share. Of course it would not have filled the measure of the mother's former ambition; but anything, she thought bitterly, would have been better than to see her child thus miserably unsatisfied and restless, fast losing the beauty that had gained her her position in society, heart-sore and embittered by her aimless life. She heard now with interest of Mr. Brockhulst's success, and the *éclat* that accompanied his career; and a sort of hope occasionally crossed her mind, that he had not forgotten Madeline, and might some time come back and renew his suit. What a downfall of ambition the existence of that same hope expressed!

And Madeline could not help listening when she heard his name, and feeling a sort of jealous pride in his success, though she was bitter against herself for feeling it, and tried to convince herself that she did not care. It had, unconsciously to herself, something to do with her interest in the Parsonage, and her eagerness to see Christine and to hear from her. That very afternoon, before she had been half an hour in the garden with her, she had asked carelessly, and with a strong touch of her habitual sarcasm, whether anything had been heard lately of their ecclesiastical Don Quixote. Christine had answered "No," and Madeline had found herself more *ennuyée* and restless than before.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"WOOD AND MARRIED AND A'."

"You have too much respect upon the world ;
They lose it that do buy it with much care."

MER. OF VENICE.— Act I. Scene 2.

BUT Madeline was to hear something more of her old lover before the day was over. A servant came down the path and said that a lady was waiting in the parlor.

"The misery of it !" cried Madeline, as she glanced at the card. "That little Richfield was my dread before she was married, but now, I think she must be appalling."

"Almost," whispered Christine, with a little shudder and a laugh, as they went towards the house.

The little Richfield was married, and the little Richfield had a baby, and had fallen quite naturally into the error of supposing that these two facts were of as engrossing interest to the public as they were to herself. She was fortunate in having a very good husband, who was not ashamed of her, and who thought her an average woman, made priceless and inestimable by being converted into his wife. He gave her plenty of money and told her to please herself in everything ; and the little woman, convinced that the world was standing still to watch her, tried very hard to obey him and to please herself in everything. Her baby had more clothes bought for him than any previous baby in — had ever had. A mass of lace and cambric, he was daily promenaded in the arms of his nurse or driven in his mamma's pretty carriage, the envy no doubt of all the babies

who had their little chins tied up in woollen hoods, and laughed and crowed over their fourteen-year-old nurses' shoulders, or were dragged about the pavement in little wicker waggons, tucked in with blanket shawls. He was sent to see every one whom his mamma desired especially to honor; and that family must have been fatally cut off from favor, of whom the little matron could say with significant firmness, "I have determined not to send baby there again."

Her thoughts circled consequently in rather narrow limits, and her conversation took no wider range. Servants' faults and babies' troubles were the principal themes, varied a little by the goodness and devotion of some husbands, and the unsatisfactory nature of others, the comfort of having plenty of money, and the impossibility of living without it. She was naturally aggravating to all less fortunate people, and Madeline went into the parlor sorely against her will.

Little Mrs. Dean had on a soft pretty French bonnet and several very elegant articles of dress, and really seemed almost handsome, overflowing with happiness, and looking all the mother whenever her eyes rested on her baby. Madeline sat silent and scornful while she chattered on. Christine, with fortunate tact, appeared to listen and sympathize, while she was really very much ashamed of her, and was truly anxious to get her into more sensible ways. She had a real tenderness for the pretty baby, though, and she took him in her arms with a murmur of sweet words.

"Him will ever go to mademoiselle," said the French nurse admiringly, as the beautiful boy laughed in Christine's face and stretched out his arms towards her.

At this moment Dr. Catherwood came up the piazza steps and paused unperceived, at the entrance of the hall. Through the open door he saw the group within, and as he looked, his face grew clouded and his mouth grew stern. Christine with a baby in her arms, a dimpled, rosy baby—looking down at it

with a wistful tender face, murmuring to it soft, low words; it was a hard thing for him to see.

Madeline sat aloof with an ungentle face, answering carelessly the chatter of the young mother who was beside her, the nurse was engrossed in smoothing out and folding up a beautiful India shawl that had served for a wrapper to the priceless baby, Christine had him for the moment to herself, and she stood opposite the door, the soft white mass of baby clothes mixing with her own soft white drapery, a lovely, lovely picture. She bent her graceful head a little and looked into his face, holding one of his pretty hands against her cheek.

The expression of her eyes none saw but the new-comer, himself unseen: it was a deep yearning hungry look of fondness. He pressed his lips together and walked across the piazza with a heavy tread.

The sound of his steps roused those within. Christine hastily put the baby back into the nurse's arms, Madeline sprang up to speak to him, most glad to be relieved of her companion, who immediately remembered that she wanted him to look at the child's teeth, which he had not seen since morning. So the Doctor entered with his usual easy smile, the baby welcomed him with a crowing, cooing noise, while the old Rector, bent and thin, came in slowly from another door. Raymond a moment after sauntered up the steps, and the quiet old parlor was soon full of pleasant voices and faces. The baby was, of course, the centre of interest; the mamma insisted on putting him in Dr. Upham's arms and asking him to kiss him; then Raymond insisted on taking him into his arms and tossing him up to the ceiling: then Dr. Catherwood must look at his teeth, and Madeline must notice the embroidery on his cloak, and Christine must hold him for a moment to see if he were not heavier than he was last week.

It was very pretty and amusing, for the baby was royally benignant and gracious, and the little mother was so happy it

was impossible to be out of patience with her: even Madeline softened somewhat towards her, till by an unfortunate allusion to the fair of three years ago, she brought up the contrast in their positions too strongly. Madeline thought bitterly of that day when she and Christine had queened it so grandly among the less favored beauties, when little Richfield had moped all the afternoon behind her pincushions and tidies, and all the evening beside the folding doors.

"By the way," said Raymond, in his lounging way, stopping to make eyes at the baby between every word—"by the way, I've heard a piece of news to-day."

"A piece of news?" cried Madeline, with animation. "Let the child alone and tell us what it is."

"An engagement?" asked the baby's mother, suspending her caresses for a moment.

"More than an engagement," he returned, "a step further."

"A marriage! Oh who, Raymond? Don't be hateful."

"Couldn't be hateful if I tried, my dear. 'Tis not my nature to—but I'll excuse you for being so impatient, for it's an old flame of yours who's married"—

"That is not being very definite," said Dr. Catherwood.

"Not Jack Leslie?" questioned Madeline, with interest.

"No, nor any of that set—somebody very different, my dear, a horse of another color. Nobody less than your friend the parson—poor Brockhulst, whom you used to punish so. For my part I'm glad enough to hear it. If he had perished in a decline you know it would have been on your conscience."

"Mr. Brockhulst married!" exclaimed little Mrs. Dean. "Well, Maddy, I always thought he was a flirt."

"Pray, what sort of a choice has he made?" asked Christine, looking furtively towards Madeline as she tied the baby's cloak. Madeline was sitting very still, clasping and unclasping a bracelet on her arm: she tried to speak, her lips moved a little, but the words did not come. Her face was pallid; it was fortunate

the sun was down and there was so little light in the room. Christine, in rather a hurried way, went on questioning Raymond and drawing attention from his sister's silence.

"Why, he's chosen a saint this time—he's one who always goes to the extremes, you know—a pale sickly little thing who never does anything but say her prayers and teach ragged schools. I met her once last summer at the Livermores', to whom she is related: I acknowledge she appalled me. But then, it's proper to say she was as much afraid of me, and turned very white and looked the other way whenever I said anything to her. In that way we did not become very intimate,—but I can testify she is a saint of the worst kind, and I think Brockhulst has done well: they will be translated some fine day together, there is not enough of either of them to die."

"Well, I am very glad to hear that he is married," said Dr. Upham; "I am sure he will be happier."

"That depends a good deal upon the sort of woman he has married," said Mrs. Dean sententiously. "A man puts his happiness very much in his wife's hands."

"Oh, I have no doubt he has chosen wisely," said Christine, anxious not to make Madeline speak. "He is at an age to marry more to please his judgment than his fancy. He will make his wife happy, too, I have no doubt."

"Oh, yes; they are as well suited as any two disembodied spirits possibly can be," said Raymond, whistling to the baby and holding out his watch chain. "Livermore says they went directly to the Denver Hospital after the ceremony, by way of a wedding tour, and that they never see each other but once all day long, and that is at a convivial meal consisting of bread and water, which lasts just eight minutes by the clock."

"Livermore is good authority," said Dr. Catherwood. "I never heard yet of his telling the truth by any accident."

"Take care; he's a friend of Madeline's," said the brother "Mad., it's time we were going home."

"Yes," said Madeline, getting up and speaking as if she had just escaped from nightmare; "I am ready; come."

"Stay with me," said Christine affectionately; "you have been away so long."

"No; I had better go," she returned. "Where did I leave my hat and parasol?"

Christine went out with her into the garden where she had left them. As they came back towards the house, Madeline broke the silence by saying, in a low, cold voice:

"Christine, I suppose that you have concluded that I loved that man. Do not be uneasy; I shall not break my heart."

"No, Madeline; I do not fear that you will break it, but that you will harden it, which is far worse."

"Spare yourself; it has been adamant ever since I have been a woman. It hasn't a natural or a human feeling in it. It is a piece of workmanship that I never understood, and for which I do not hold myself responsible. Stop: I don't want any sympathy; I am quite beyond all that, you know. You might as well harangue one of those grave-stones over there. Good by. Go in and tell Raymond I am ready for him; I don't want to be half an hour saying good night to that silly woman, and kissing her tiresome baby."

Christine gave a sigh, kissed her friend, and sent Raymond out to her to the gate.

"It seems to me," said Mrs. Dean, as she fastened the last loop in the baby's cloak and sent the nurse to call the carriage, "it seems to me that Madeline is out of spirits. She is really changed in every way."

"She is tired and ill to-day," said Christine quickly; "she has been unpacking all the morning; she wants rest after her winter of excitement."

"It is a great pity she has not married," returned the complacent little wife. "She never will be happy till she does."

"I don't know about that," Christine answered rather insincerely, as she went down the steps and watched them drive away

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SUSPICIONS.

"For it is with feelings as with waters,
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb."

THAT evening Dr. Upham was not so well, possibly owing to the excitement of seeing so many visitors in the afternoon. Ann went down for Dr. Catherwood, who was out, but who came up about nine o'clock. Christine left him with her father, and took her work to the parlor lamp and sat silently by it for an hour. Her eyes were troubled, and they wandered off her work very often, and more than once she arose, walked to the window, and listened very anxiously. Twice the gate opened, and she quickly resumed her place, banished the care from her brow, and looked up ready to greet the new comer cheerfully. But it was only a servant with some message and a trifling invitation, and in the silence that ensued, the anxiety came back redoubled.

Eleven o'clock struck—half-past—and still the gate did not open again. Christine pressed her lips together, and tried to keep back the sudden tears that came with the sound of the striking clock. She was not new to these vigils; Julian was no longer a child whom Crescens drove to bed at the bayonet's point, but a great overgrown lad of seventeen, who scorned Christine as he did Crescens, and who considered that he owed allegiance and submission to no living mortal. His grandfather could only counsel—his aunt could only sue; the youth had long since taken the bit between his teeth and was going pell-mell to destruction.

All the evil in him, and there had always been more evil in him than in any other child of Adam, had flowered out into luxurious growth within these last three years. He was not even a polite young villain ; he was a loafer, a tavern loungee, a hard drinker, a rough swearer. His tastes led him to the lowest haunts, and he brought away from them their enduring brand.

He had outgrown the aristocratic look of his childhood. He was still handsome, strikingly so ; but it was the lowest and least pleasing form of beauty ; his eye was not only keen and cold as it had always been, it had an evil brightness that made Christina shudder ; and his mouth, the baby mouth that she had kissed a thousand times with almost a mother's fondness, had lost its childish beauty, and expressed all the sinful passions of which his eyes showed the knowledge.

The first awakening to this fact, the first startling discovery of the impurity and boldness of the boy, had been the worst part of her trial. For a long time she had felt the distance growing between them, had known that he was becoming more than ever, something that she could not understand ; but when the first palpable, unmistakable proof came that he had fallen, she had her burst of grief, her agony of disappointment, and then she rose and went forward bearing her burden with silent fortitude. She did whatever she could devise to make the house attractive to him ; she invited those of his own age there, and made it bright and cheerful with young girls and music and pleasure, but, alas ! pleasure in which innocence and purity could share was not pleasure to him ; he showed his contempt and distaste without reserve, and Christine gave up her stratagems with a sigh. To her father she never dared disclose the full extent of his wrong-doing, but he knew enough to be bowed down with sorrow. Remonstrance, warning, counsel, only seemed to harden him ; Christine had ceased to speak to him about his evil courses, and met him with manners

simple, affectionate, and free from all reproach. She could only do this for him; he should ever meet truth and purity at home; he should always find forbearance and tenderness waiting for him there, whenever he would come for it.

The little town had not had such a promising scandal in it since poor Helena's time. The boy was talked of in all circles, and the worst made of his faults. There were many versions of his treatment at home. Some said he never was reproofed nor warned; others said that he had been cast off entirely, and that his grandfather never saw him. Some were dissatisfied with the leniency manifested towards him; others were disedified by the harshness with which report said he was treated. In no case were the Rector and his daughter considered to be doing right, and Christine was not wrong in feeling that Julian's course was undoing all that her father's blameless life and her own self-sacrifice would have done to lead the world to believe in the Christianity that they professed.

Dr. Catherwood was the only one who acted at all as a restraint to Julian; he had no longer any influence with him that went deep enough to promise any good result. He had given up the hope of changing him; he saw the disease had struck too deep a root; he only trusted to hold him so in check as to prevent his total ruin now. If one germ of self-respect could be left alive there was a chance that, his mad boyhood past, it might develop into something healthy. Julian hated him, and appeared to revolt from his interference more than from any other; but in his presence he was subdued, and to his directions, even when absent from him, he paid, under protest, a sort of grudging and ungracious regard. Christine wondered at this, and so did all others who were much about him; Dr. Catherwood had no hold over him, such as his aunt or his grandfather might be supposed to have, from their power to supply him with money or to withhold it from him. He had no authority as a guardian, no influence as a benefactor, for such a claim the

boy would have scouted ; but he nevertheless kept Lim in awe of his displeasure, and by the mere force of his determination held him, absent and present, under something like restraint.

To him Christine had always gone when she was in perplexity about her duty, and the boy soon found Dr. Catherwood **knew fully his plans and purposes** and resources, and had his eye forever on him ; no revel so secret, no companion so sly, but Dr. Catherwood knew fully all that could be known about them. A larger portion of his time than Christine suspected was consumed in this surveillance ; he was well known and much dreaded in all the haunts of vice with which the growing town abounded, and to his resolution and sharp management it was owing that Julian long ago was not openly disgraced. The men whose business it was to tempt and destroy the youths whom they could get within their influence, stood in some awe of this acute and determined guardian, and were rather shy of connecting themselves in any way with Julian's mad career.

Dr. Catherwood grew older and sterner-looking ; he did not lose his genial and sympathetic manner when in the world, but when silent and by himself the change was very visible. No one had cause to say that he was altered, because towards them he was the same. No sufferer was the poorer for the withdrawal of his sympathy, no home where he was useful could complain of his estrangement ; but towards himself, in his inner life, he was solitary, stern, and gloomy. To meet him driving alone out on some distant country road, absorbed in his own thoughts, with knit brow and stern lips, one would have said, that is a man too full of trouble and perplexity to do the world much service. But the sudden softening of the hard-drawn lines, the warmth of the fine smile at the sight of a well known face, or the call to some act of kindness, would dissipate the image of the self-absorbed misanthropist, and place in its stead that of the genial, honest-hearted man of feeling. His self-control was beyond praise ; his power of self

forgetfulness beyond precedent ; Christine looked at him with secret wonder, questioning if he had forgotten, if he were reconciled to what he had so boldly rebelled against at first.

The thought filled her with jealous misery, and then brought bitter penitence. Had she not hoped and prayed he might forget and learn another happiness ? But she had not believed that it was possible ; she felt rebellion when she found that it had come to pass. And her manner had a coldness and a deadness in it when they were together that had the effect of making him believe she had outgrown the youthful passion that her eyes betrayed on that November afternoon in the old garden. He almost doubted, as he recalled the scene, whether his own passion had not colored all he saw of her emotion. What had she said ? How had she betrayed the love that he had allowed himself to believe in ? She was so young, so impressionable, had he not mistaken her emotion at learning his feelings towards her, for a depth of affection she never meant to express ? He could not believe that one so young could have made the conquest that she had made ; in his heart he thought her cold and passionless, as she believed him indifferent and forgetful. So true it is that no hearts, however true, can bear the test of rigid silence and suppression. Interviews now were painful, and rarely sought for by either one of them.

But that evening, as Christine waited for Julian in the parlor, she resolved to speak to Dr. Catherwood as he came down from her father's room. She heard the door above close, and Dr. Catherwood's step upon the stairs, and she felt the sort of throb that she used to feel in those old, old days at the same sound. A feeling of self-reproach chilled her voice and manner as she went forward to the door and spoke to him. He followed her into the room and sat down at the table, holding his hat in his hand, and waiting for her to say why she had called him

"You find my father weak, I fear, to-night ?" she said, dreading to come to what she had in mind.

"Why, no; not particularly. I cannot see that he loses strength, though these little attacks depress him very much."

"I am very glad to hear you say so. I always fear I cannot judge."

There was a pause, and then Christine went on, with an effort, and abruptly: "Dr. Catherwood, is this thing to go on? Julian has not been home since yesterday."

Dr. Catherwood looked up thoughtfully. "I do not see any help for its going on. I have weighed a great many plans in my mind, and I do not find that any of them will answer. The evil is in the child. To send him away will only be to give him a larger theatre; to put him under stricter rule at home, will only serve to add fresh stimulus to his vicious determination. The only hope for him, it seems to me, is to guard him from any open and notorious disgrace, and to act as if there were something good in him that had not been brought out. I need not say, do not lose your faith in him; you will cherish a spark of that, I know, long beyond any other being. But his ruin is accomplished when that dies; many a man has been saved by the faith of some woman in him, which has survived his evil life and at last revived his own. It is, it has long been, my care to save the boy from disgrace before the world; it lies with you to keep in his sight the fact that there is purity and affection for him in his home. We can do nothing more for him that I can see. Cease to perplex yourself about his whereabouts. You know I am never ignorant of them. I know where he is to-night; where he has been since yesterday. My eye is never off him. His personal safety I can satisfy you of; of his moral safety you can judge as well as I."

"It is my only relief to know this," said Christine, the tears swimming for a moment in her eyes. "You may think me childish to have doubted it for an instant, and required reassurance. But something has come to my knowledge that has given me alarm. Did you know Harry Gilmore had come back?"

"No," said her companion: "How have you ascertained this?"

"By a note that Julian carelessly mislaid, and the idea of his being here would have given me uneasiness enough if the note had not been what it is."

She took a crumpled-piece of paper from her work-box and gave it to Dr. Catherwood, who read it with a thoughtful face. Christine watched him anxiously; she might have saved herself the trouble; nothing that Dr. Catherwood chose to conceal ever expressed itself upon his features. He chose to conceal the alarm that her announcement gave him, and that the reading of the note increased; and Christine only saw him serious and deliberate, as he always was when he talked of Julian.

But there was cause for uneasiness to-night; Harry Gilmore, sent off a year ago on some suspicion of his honesty, was here again—recalled evidently by Julian, as the note seemed to indicate. Dr. Catherwood had always felt that there was more that he was glad not to know in that entanglement of Harry's. He had done all he could to hush the matter up, and to get Harry quietly away; he felt that all the disgrace was not lighting where it was deserved; the miller's boy was again shielding his more fortunate accomplice. But what could he do? It was not rendering justice to Harry to ruin Julian, too; and by quieting the matter, even at a heavy expense to himself, he was saving Harry from the punishment of law. But here was the young reprobate returned—to be the keener Julian's tool again, no doubt. What did it mean? There was no time to lose. Dr. Catherwood rose, and trying to disguise his impatience to be away, was saying good-night to his companion with an unhurried manner, when the gate opened and Julian's quick light step ran up to the piazza. He glanced in at the half-open window, paused, and then entering the hall-door, came resolutely into the parlor. Christine felt amazed. This was so different from his ordinary way of skulking up to his own

room without a word to any one, when he had stayed away a length of time that challenged comment.

He looked very pale, and his voice was not quite steady when he spoke, though his manner was an effort at more non-chalance than ordinary. He was haggard, and his dress was careless; Christine felt the repugnance that the sight of him always now called forth, succeeded by the instinctive yearning and pity that no change in him could overpower. Dr. Catherwood addressed him simply and commonplacely, with not very much kindness in his tone and with some latent authority. Julian showed ordinarily very little of the bully in Dr. Catherwood's presence, but to-night he made a faint effort at it. He threw himself upon a sofa, and passing his hand through his still beautiful golden hair, curling short upon his forehead, exclaimed:

"I'm tired beyond anything I ever felt. I've been off all day trouting in the brooks back of Negley's farm, a good eight miles' tramp there before sunrise and back since dark. Ross went with me; I stayed all night with him to have our tackle ready and be off betimes."

"Well, and what luck had you?"

Dr. Catherwood's tone had nothing exactly sceptical in it, but it had the effect of disconcerting Julian very much. He changed color, caught his breath, looked down, and tried to answer with indifference.

"Rather poor luck, I'm afraid; that is, I think, I—I—should call it poor. I gave Ross the fish; I didn't bring any home."

It was so unusual for Julian to give any account of himself that Christine listened in surprise, sharing in Dr. Catherwood's suspicions, and yet half-angry with him for confusing and disconcerting the boy so. Dr. Catherwood's manner to him latterly had provoked her, though she felt fully the necessity of his knowing there was some one he could not deceive. In

this trying position Dr. Catherwood had consented to stand to him, his hated mentor, his keen-eyed and uncompromising judge; interfering where it seemed he had no business to interfere, and detested in proportion as his authority was disputed. Christine ought to have felt, and did feel grateful, but she often found herself feeling that he was hard on Julian—that no one had any business to suspect—what she knew but too well. It was the true mother instinct; how she came by it would have been difficult to explain.

When Julian next spoke, it was with a nervous desire to break the silence, and further to establish his whereabouts through the day and night just past. Dr. Catherwood only listened, without a word of comment, and after a moment turned to go, bidding good-night to Christine, and saying to Julian as he passed him, "Come to my office about ten to-morrow morning, will you? I would like to see you a few moments."

Julian winced at the invitation, but did not dare to offer any dissent from it; he said he would come, and then after Dr. Catherwood had left the house, threw himself back again on the sofa, and with a smothered passion begged Christine to tell him what right that man had to order him about to please himself.

"I did not know he did order you about," said Christine, coldly, angry now at Julian for his disrespect to Dr. Catherwood.

"Didn't he order me to be at his office to-morrow at ten o'clock?" he said, impatiently—"and don't he give me as many orders in the course of a month as if I were his slave?"

"Why do you obey them, then?" asked Christine, abruptly, looking at him steadily.

He uttered a half-inaudible oath, and walked impatiently about the room.

"By heavens, he'll find I'll not do it much longer!" he mut

tered; "to-morrow's the last day he'll have me dancing attendance on him at his office, the—the—"

"Julian, no more of that," said Christine, with a manner of determination. "You know as well as I do what you owe to Dr. Catherwood, and though at heart you are ungrateful, at least you shall be outwardly respectful before me and in this house, where from a child he has watched over you and cared for you as no one but the best friend could have done. I firmly believe you would never have come out of some of those terrible illnesses, Julian, but for him."

"I wish I never had come out of them," cried Julian, with a momentary spasm of some strong remorse as he plunged his face in his hands and shook all over. "I wish to heaven he had let me die."

"Julian, for your poor mother's sake——"

"What do I care for my poor mother! I owe it to her that I was born, and to him that I am not dead. A curse upon them both——"

"Julian!" exclaimed Christine with a shudder, sinking back and covering her face.

The boy gave a contemptuous laugh as he raised his head, and shaking back his curls, strode across the room. "Does that shock you so! Why, that gentleman in the Old Testament that we hear so much about when we go to church like good children to be told about our duty, used to curse right and left about the day that he was born, and the people that had anything to do with his coming into the world. I used to think it rather queerish when I was a little fellow, but since I've come to man's estate I don't wonder half so much at Job's breach of the commandment. Zounds!" he continued, in a lighter tone, "but I feel like swearing roundly every morning when the time comes to get up, and every night when there's no way of getting off from going to bed. It's all a deuced bore, Christine. Where shall I find a candle?"

Christine did not look up or speak to him. He glanced back at her a little anxiously as he left the room, and paused when half across the hall, evidencing an intention of going back to counteract the serious impression that his first passionate words had made upon her. His face grew more haggard when he was out of the sight of any one; he looked, as he stood alone in the hall with the candle in his hand, debating whether he should go back and undo the mischief he had done himself by his burst of remorse, like a beautiful fallen spirit—his beauty was so great, its marring so dark and awful. The cunning and dangerous expression of his eyes, the worn and anxious lines about his mouth, could not disguise his youth; his skin was exquisitely fair, his features perfect in their outline, his hair was like a golden glory round his head.

"Shall I go back," he said to himself, glancing in stealthily to the room where Christine sat motionless, "and risk overdoing it, and putting it into her head that I am frightened at letting myself out so? She is so terribly acute there's no getting ahead of her at an ordinary pace. No; I'd better let it go and trust that she'll forget it. Fool! I'd give my head if I had held my tongue."

And with another dissatisfied glance back, he went slowly up the stairs and shut himself into his rooms.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HARRY DOES NOT COME HOME.

"If the stone strikes against the earthen jar, woe to the jar; and if the jar strikes against the stone, woe not the less to the jar."

SPANISH PROVERB.

PHŒBE GILMORE had sat waiting hour after hour that same night for Harry, with feelings not unlike Christine's as she sat waiting hour after hour for Julian. Phœbe's home was no longer the cottage by the mill-dam where the vines shut out the sunlight from the windows, and the rush of the water cooled the air and soothed the ear, but the old tumble-down house next the blacksmith's, just beyond the town, where Old Hundred had spent his fifty honest and contented years. It had grown more tumble-down and rickety since Phœbe had come into it. No one had hired the shed; Old Hundred's custom had gone to smiths more in the town, and no one was found to lease or purchase the good-will and fixtures of the undesirable place. The old man had left no will; his little property had been divided among his "heirs," and all that was left as Harry's portion was an interest in this old house, for which a purchaser had not been found, and in which Phœbe had permission to live till one turned up. It was a wretched, starving life she led, working hard with her needle, while Harry was loafing shiftlessly about the town. Phœbe had given up the Methodists, and they said the hand of Providence was in her troubles. She had not come back to the Church, and the Church people said she could not have expected any different result. Her better neighbors were giving her up, and her poorer ones were begin-

ning to hold themselves above her, and she felt every man's hand against her and her boy. The worldly people told her she had ruined him by the way she had brought him up, and the pious people told her she would have his perdition on her soul for ever; and she despised and defied them all, and yearned and groaned in secret over the lad, and cursed the day in which he and she were born.

Yes, she had ruined him; yes, if he were in eternal peril, she alone would be held to answer for it. She knew it, and she defied the wrath of heaven and the scorn of men. Harry hated his home; he shrank from his mother's alternate upbraidings and fierce, tiger-like bursts of caressing and remorse. He felt the pinching poverty and the continual gloom too oppressive for his only half-deadened conscience, and the sight of his mother's trouble too painful for his tender heart; for Harry had a tender heart, and so went all the farther and surer wrong when once he tried to smother it and get the upper hand with it.

Julian Upham had been his continual associate till the trouble a year before, when all had seemed to turn away from him in suspicion, and when the only course left for him was to fly from suspicion and discovery and punishment. A bitter and revengeful heart his mother had borne through the long and anxious year that he had been away—where, she knew not; whether living or dead she could only guess; while Julian Upham, equal, she could have sworn, in error and in danger, was living unharmed and unsuspected in the town where her boy dared not show his face. Once or twice, when Julian had looked out of some tavern-haunt where Harry had spent his time before he went away, through the darkness of the night he had caught sight of her sullen, pallid face peering in, her threatening eyes on him, and he had shuddered and drawn back, and tried to forget the sight.

But now Harry had come back as stealthily as he had gone

away, and he was alive and unchanged, except that he seemed older and had a more sullen and hang-dog look. She did not dare to ask what life he had been leading. She only felt, he was in her arms again; his brown hair soft and silky to her touch, his lips red and warm, as she hung over him stealthily while he slept.

He had been home two days and nights; during the first day he had hung about the house; the night he had spent away; the day again at home, and about twilight he had gone out; and now she sat late into the night watching for him, and wondering if he would come back. The outskirts of this little town was always dull and silent. To-night's stillness was an awful oppression to the lonely woman; she knew she could have heard a footstep a quarter of a mile off on the flagged walk that led from the town to the end of the street on which the house was situated. Her ear was strained to the uttermost to catch the lightest sound; no one passed along the walk—no vehicle rolled through the street; from eight until eleven there was not the sign of any living presence in the dreary suburb.

Phœbe sat on a low seat by the blackened and cold hearth, rocking herself slowly backward and forward in her chair—now stopping to listen, now rocking to break the silence. She was not a woman to give way to womanish and superstitious fancies; but there was one that haunted her nightly in this desolate abode, and through all the wakeful, remorseful nights that she had passed in it, it had been her constant torture. There was a door leading out of the kitchen, now the only habitable room the house contained, a door closed and padlocked—that led into the old blacksmith's shed. Through that door there came nightly the dull, regular sound of strokes upon the anvil; monotonous and smothered, as if from within a deep and sand-choked cave; all night long she heard them in the intervals of sleep. She had grown so accustomed to the sound that she

had ceased to feel the throb of terror it had caused at first, only a chill as of a cold wind creeping across her, and she would fall asleep again. But this night she was overwrought and unnerved; she felt as if the muffled beat upon the anvil in the low, dark, old shed would drive her mad; she rocked her chair heavily upon the bare and sounding floor to drown it, but it was not drowned. The roar of cannon at her side would no have drowned it. It seemed to have its own place in the changing currents of the air, and to sound on in her ear unceasingly. No wonder that her hair was white and her eyes were wild with such nights following such days as hers!

She pressed her hands tight against her temples and pushed back the hair, groaning aloud in the intolerable agony of her soul. Oh, for one touch of Harry's living hand—one sight of breathing flesh and blood! Would he never come! There was no clock to tell the hours in that miserable home; it was very late, she knew, by the terrible length of time that had passed since dark came on. She drew her apron over her head and went out of the house down to the path; there was no gate, and the fence had long since fallen to decay. She stood leaning against an old tree-stump beside the path and listened. The night was dark and still; not a breath of air stirred; not a star gleamed in the sky. Presently she heard the town clock strike—one. Distant as it was, she heard it with all distinctness, the night was so very still. Then Harry would not be back; she shivered and turned again into the house. Would he come back at all? A sudden terror seized her. She remembered he had said a gruff good-night, and had come back and made some clumsy attempt at a caress as he went away in the twilight.

She seized the flickering tallow candle and hurried up into the loft where he had slept. The old clothes which he had worn, and which were the only ones she knew of his having, were lying on the floor, kicked into a corner, shoes and hat and all. He had gone out in some different suit which she had not

noticed in the dark. Every article that he had brought with him—a pistol, a little case of tools, a dingy wallet stuffed with papers—all of which he had kept since he returned in a chest beside his bed, were gone. The conviction rushed upon her mind—Harry was not coming back. She set down the candle for a moment and tried to collect herself and understand what it all meant. It meant—Harry was again the accomplice in some evil deed; again the tool of more wicked and artful brains than his; again placed in peril of his life, perhaps; again lost to her touch, to her sight, for years—for years!—perhaps for ever. The craving, terrible mother-love burst forth in a cry of anguish; the thought of separation from her child was like a mortal pang.

She sprang to her feet, rushed down, passed the old shed where the beat upon the anvil was sounding ceaselessly, and out into the night, towards the silent, sleeping town.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BY JULIAN'S BEDSIDE.

"O holy night! from thee I learn to bear,
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy fingers on the lips of care,
And they complain no more."

LONGFELLOW.

CHRISTINE was sitting half-undressed in her own room, with her arm upon the window-sill, her hair loose upon her shoulders, a white wrapper thrown about her. The light was burning low upon the table; the window was open to the dark, still night. Her eyes were wet with tears; her attitude expressed languor and weariness. Two hours had passed since she came to her room, and yet she had not gone to bed. She heard the town clock strike one, and she half-aroise and then sank wearily back again; and leaning her forehead on her crossed arms on the window-sill, remained motionless for half an hour.

She was aroused by the sudden opening of the gate, the sound of a quick step on the walk, a sharp blow on the knocker. Fortunately, the knocker was a stiff affair and did not yield easily to the hand; it came down with a slow, sullen noise that would not have waked the lightest sleeper.

Christine sprang up, fearing she knew not what, and taking the candle in her hand hurried down the stairs. A natural feeling of fear would have made her hesitate before she slid back the bolt, but that she longed to prevent a second knock, which would perhaps have roused her father, whose nights were most disturbed and wakeful now. She pushed back the bolt, turned the key, and with a choking sense of apprehen-

sion, opened the door a little way. It was pushed strongly from without; Christine retreated several steps, and held the candle up before she recognised, in the haggard woman in the door-way, the once familiar face of Phoebe Gilmore.

Her eyes were sullen and flaming, her dress was pitifully poor, and her fine black hair had turned to grey since Christine had seen her last. She had some fierce words on her lips as she came in at the door, but the sight of Christine checked her for an instant, but only for an instant.

"I have come for my boy," she said, fiercely. "I know the place to come for him; I have held my tongue for a year or more. I am not going to hold it any longer. Call Julian down and tell him Harry Gilmore's mother wants to see him."

"I do not believe Julian can tell you anything about your boy, Phoebe," said Christine, retreating another step; for the woman's manner was frightful enough. "Come in and tell me why you think he can."

"You know as well as I do why I think he can. You know whose money hushed things up and sent the boy away. You know who always hatches up the mischief, and who always bears the blame. It's gone on long enough, my delicate young woman. You're very sweet and pretty, and very pious, people say. But it's gone on long enough. Because you are the minister's daughter isn't a reason that you should be always kept from learning ugly words. Ministers are all very well in their way, but if they don't look after their sons and daughters they must bear the consequences of it. I'm a poor woman, and I don't go to church and am not much thought of by you pious people; but I've got a right to be heard, and the law will hear me if you won't. The law, my nice young lady, the law! And Julian Upham shall answer for his work some time before he's an old man, depend upon it. Some time before he's a much older man than he is now. Call him down, for I am not going away without a sight of him."

"Listen," said Christine, in a quiet voice. "Julian is asleep. I do not want to wake him; I do not want to wake my father. Come in the morning. You can see him then."

"Hist," said the woman, in a voice that made Christine shudder. "You are very clever, but I am clever, too; I know as well as you do that Julian is not in the house. That is what I came to know. That is what I mean to swear before the magistrate to-morrow."

"He is in the house," said Christine, with a firmness that startled her. "He has been in it several hours."

"Can you swear that?" said her companion, tauntingly.

"I can swear that," she returned, unmoved.

"Show him to me or I can swear you could not."

"I shall not show him to you," she said, with deliberation, "but upon one condition. That you go noiselessly up with me to the door of his room, look at him without awakening him, and go away without disturbing any member of the house. If you promise this you can go up with me now."

"I promise," said the woman, after a moment of silence.

Christine felt a shiver as she took up the candle from the hall-table and went towards the stairs, the woman following closely. She had long felt that Phœbe was half insane; her words and looks to-night confirmed her in the belief that her mind had been shattered by her dreadful trials. To be going stealthily through a dark and silent house at the dead hour of night, with no help at hand, and with a fierce and half-crazed enemy at her back, was not a thing that all women could have done composedly. Christine was very pale, and the hand that held the candle shook almost imperceptibly; but her voice was firm and her step deliberate.

"You had better take off your shoes," she said, pausing before they reached the upper landing. "They make a noise, and I do not want to wake my father."

The woman stooped and slipped off her loose heavy shoes;

this gave Christine an advantage; it gave her an excuse to pause and get her companion beside her, which was much more comfortable than having her out of sight—and carrying the shoes kept one of the hands employed, which Christine's active fancy was imagining continually in a tight grasp around her throat. The corridor was long and dark, and the candle flickered and gave but a dim, faint light; at the door of Julian's room Christine paused again, and said:

"Remember your promise; you are not to speak nor wake him, nor go to the bed; only to look at him, and then go away."

"I remember," said the woman, doggedly; and Christine, with a thousand misgivings, softly turned the handle of the door and entered.

Phœbe followed her closely; Christine paused a few feet from the bed, and laying her hand on the woman's arm to keep her back, held the candle so that the light fell full upon the bed. It was a pretty bed, with delicate white coverings, and pillows with wide embroidered trimmings. Upon the wall above hung a picture, bought for its resemblance to Helena; the face haughty, coquettish, and defiant—a face that it was difficult to think of as a mother's, bending over a cradle, or smiling down upon a waking baby. The furniture of the room was graceful, and showed that the boy had had all loving arts employed to make him pleased at home. The shelves were filled with books; there were easy chairs, and a sofa with a beautiful embroidered cushion. Phœbe thought bitterly of the loft where Harry flung himself down to sleep at night, or where in dangerous times he hid himself by day; and as her eyes fell upon the boy fast asleep upon the soft, luxurious bed, with his gold-colored hair upon the fair white pillow, and his graceful arm flung over the dainty coverlet, there passed an expression across her face which it was well her companion did not see.

Christine was looking at him with a yearning tenderness;

•

he was so beautiful when he slept, where could the vicious and evil temper be that made her life so miserable !

There was a perfect silence ; could the boy have opened his eyes and looked up, what a strange sight would have met them ! His beautiful young aunt with her fair unbound hair, gazing at him with tender eyes, and holding back the strange, haggard, evil-eyed woman, whose gaze seemed to devour him. Unconscious of what passed around him, he slept on and never knew the love and the revenge that had watched above his bed ; and because he did not see it he did not believe in it—one child among many who will not believe in the guardianship they do not see.

"Are you satisfied ?" Christine whispered low, as her companion drew a long deep breath and moved back a step. Her clenched hand relaxed as Christine spoke.

"Yes, I am satisfied," she said, going towards the door, stopping to glance back at the sleeper once before she reached it. She went before Christine through the hall and down the stairs with a quick, excited tread ; and stopping to put on her shoes as she reached the hall-door, drew her shawl around her and went out, without a word or a look towards her conductor.

Christine bolted the door after her with a sensation of profound relief, and hurried through the house to secure all the other fastenings before she went to her own room to ponder over the strange events of the night, and to apprehend a thousand evils coming in their train.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A ROBBERY.

"Qui se couche avec des chiens, se leve avec les puces."

A NEW excitement filled the town of — on the next day ; an excitement that struck a chill to Christine's very heart, and that made Dr. Catherwood look darker and more perplexed than ever. The bank had been robbed ; a wholesale and tremendous robbery. Raymond Clybourne, recently made a teller in it, had disappeared ; suspicion, of course, fastened itself upon him, but it was evident the robbery was the work of two or three at least. All sorts of conjectures were rife, and the testimony of more than one person, that young Gilmore had been seen about the place within a day or two, had directed inquiry towards him.

For three days nothing else was talked of ; every possible step was taken to apprehend the suspected parties. No trace of them could be discovered. Phœbe Gilmore was cross-examined as to the return and departure of her son. The unhappy woman was maddened to find every word she said was forging chains for Harry. She entered an accusation against Julian, and reiterated her conviction that in both cases of her son's delinquency he had been an accomplice and abettor. But all this passed for the bitter spleen of a half-crazed mother ; the ancient grudge she bore the minister's family was remembered, and as there were plenty to testify to Julian's whereabouts on the night of the robbery and on the day preceding it, she found herself powerless to do an injury where she so burned to do one.

Dr. Catherwood had not been idle. He had had but a short interview with Julian, but more than one with the directors of the bank, in which he was a large stockholder. The Clybourne family were plunged in the most terrible affliction; no one dared to go to them but Dr. Catherwood: even Christine was afraid to seek Madeline for the present time.

And Julian—a little pale and haggard, but doggedly self-possessed—he went about his ordinary amusements and occupations; somewhat ostentatiously perhaps keeping himself in sight, and speculating more than seemed altogether natural on the recent astounding news. He was at home rather more than usual; Christine felt all the time a strange and growing apprehension of some new development; but she did not even define it to herself. His occasional caresses made her shudder and then filled her with self-reproach. What did she suspect? He had always grudged the half hour in the day which decency, and perhaps policy, had demanded he should spend with his grandfather. The old man was sad and silent always after seeing him. He felt that things were going wrong; he forbore to disgust him with good advice, and he felt his inability to influence him; and looking to Dr. Catherwood for his actual guidance, he kept silence and seemed unmoved. But during the week that succeeded the bank robbery, Julian had gone often to the study, spending a large part of his time at home there, and evidently endeavoring to ingratiate himself with his grandfather. What progress he made no one ever knew; the subject of his grandson was sealed between Dr. Upham and his family.

A long week it was to Christine; her apprehensions did not subside; her sleep was restless and broken. One night, just eight from the unhappy one when Phœbe Gilmore made her strange visit to the Parsonage, Christine woke from her uneasy slumber with a start, and with the impression that some noise had roused her. But it was so vague she could not recall its

nature. For a long while she lay quietly, trying to forget it and trying to sleep. But at length she resolved it would do no harm to go and look at Julian, and assure herself that he was safe. Many times within the last week she had gone to his room at night, and soothed herself by seeing him innocently and peacefully asleep. She prepared herself hastily, and lighting a candle went towards his room. A painful apprehension struck her, when, as she reached it, the cold night wind from an open window within blew out the newly lighted candle. It seemed an interminable time before she could relight it and come back to the room. Shading it with her hand, she entered.

A scene of careless confusion—an empty bed, an open window; Christine's heart died within her. She shut the window, put the candle on a stand beside it, and sat down. Julian was gone. This confirmed her dread for him. And yet, perhaps, impatient of the restraint and coldness at home, he had rushed into larger liberty. Other boys had done it and outlived the folly. Perhaps he would return; perhaps this was but for a few days' adventure. But the sack of his drawers, the confusion of his room, did not look like that exactly. Everything of value was gone; a pair of richly-mounted pistols and a handsome dirk that had been among his mother's valuables, and had always decorated a panel in his room, were taken down; his clothes had evidently been looked over with care, and the best portion of them taken. What was to be done? Christine did not know; he was gone. Pursuit was vain. Her first thought was to shield him. None should know that he had fled from her so ungratefully. With a heavy heart she began to fold up and rearrange his clothes. The servant in the morning must not suspect that he had left his room for longer than the day; before night she could arrange something to say in explanation of his absence. It was a sad task, indeed, but Christine was used to sad work.

Presently she saw something that broke her composure down

completely. A little picture of herself that she had given him, and that hung beside his glass, was gone. He had taken it; he had felt a little love and a little tenderness as he thought of leaving her. Oh, her darling boy, her poor lost Julian! With a burst of sobs she flung herself upon the bed and pressed her face down upon the pillow. Her heart had yearned for years for some token that he loved her—some sign that his heart was human, and now it came too late. Perhaps it was her fault that he was what he was. The most self-torturing thoughts succeeded each other in her mind—she had not pursued the right method with him; she had been too cold, too exacting. She had sacrificed her life to him with the purest motive, and had lost him by some involuntary error. What should she say to Helena? How should she answer before Heaven for this soul? All his faults were covered by this little charity of tenderness. She loved him as she always loved him—when asleep, when absent, or when ill. She thought of him as her little son, the dear charge of her early girlhood, the object of her prayers, her love, her solicitude, before any other object came to dispute her heart with him. Oh, that was the sin, she feared. She had kept to the letter of her promise, and had violated its whole spirit. Everything seemed changed. Julian was no longer the sinner but the sinned against. She lay till dawn crept faintly in at the windows, in an agony of self-reproach and misery. The approach of daylight roused her; she arose and resumed her task of putting the room in its ordinary shape.

Just as she had completed it and was turning to leave the room, her eye caught something now visible in the pale grey light, lying on the floor under the dressing-glass. She stooped to pick it up. It was her picture, the delicate frame crushed in by the tread of a careless foot. A cold steel seemed to cut into her heart at that sight. She dropped the picture into the nearest drawer and turned the key, and went out of the room feeling as if she dreamed.

The study door was open ; she glanced into it as she passed. Her father's door was closed which communicated with it. Both these things were unusual. She entered hastily, and went up to her father's private desk ; the lock was broken, the contents rifled. She tried hurriedly to restore it to its usual look, adjusted the broken lock, and thought of the moment when her father must know what she did. She had no prayer to say just then. She passed by the window that looked into the church yard, but it did not seem peaceful now, only cold and dead and hopeless. The grey dawn was breaking into a cold and stormy day. The rain was beginning to patter against the panes, and the wind blew in gusts that shook and bowed the tender young green branches of the trees. How could they—how could the sweet frail flowers in the garden beds below, live through this cold and cruel storm.

She turned shivering away.

CHAPTER XL.

DE PROFUNDIS.

"And cold before my summer's done,
And deaf in Nature's general tune,
And fallen too low for special fear,
And here, with hope no longer here,—
While the tears drop, my days go on."

E. B. BROWNING.

DR. CATHERWOOD looked out from the window of his little parlor that morning, as he heard the gate-latch lifted. A carriage stood at the gate, and a lady was coming down the path. It was Christine with a cloak wrapped around her, bowing her head to meet the storm of wind and rain that was sweeping round the house. He hurried out to the door. He divined what had brought her. She had come to his house but twice before—once when Mrs. Sherman brought her there to luncheon, that summer four years ago, and once when she had been in some trouble about the boy. She always seemed afraid of the placé, and looked away when she passed it. He felt a strange sensation of satisfaction that she had had to come to it at last. He opened the door, and taking her hand, drew her in from the storm, and led her to the bright fire in the grate of the little room.

"Take off this wet cloak," he said. "This is a terrible storm for June."

"It is no matter about the cloak," she said, loosening it a little and sinking down into the chair he placed for her beside the fire. Her face was ashy pale, and the black shade beneath her eyes made them look larger and darker than ever. Her

lips were livid, and she seemed so chilled for a few moments it was impossible for her to speak.

"Let me give you something," he said, moving towards the sideboard.

"No," she said, rising and arresting his hand; "there is nothing the matter with me; I am only cold. I came to tell you, Julian has gone away."

"I am not surprised. I felt sure that he would go."

"That is not the worst. I want you to know it all," said Christine, covering her face.

Dr. Catherwood looked anxious and alarmed as he led her back to her chair in silence.

"He has taken everything from my father's desk, and you must tell him, for I cannot. I think it would kill me if I had to do it."

Dr. Catherwood grew suddenly pale, as if the news had sickened him. He passed his hand across his forehead, which was wet with a sudden moisture, and turned away to the window for a moment. Christine did not look up, and presently he turned back to her and said in a voice that betrayed no unusual feeling:

"Christine, God knows all about this boy. You have done your duty."

A low cry escaped her lips as if he had touched on too quivering a chord. But he knew what he was doing.

"You have given up everything for him," he went on, "and I know would at any time have died to assure yourself of his present and eternal safety. You have been judicious. I have looked on, and have seen all; you may rest assured you have fewer errors of judgment to regret than most have who govern children. I have wondered often at your great discretion. I believe the only course that presented a chance of saving him has been pursued. For his own sake, for yours, for my own, I have exerted all my ingenuity to win him to a better life. I

have failed. You have failed. I believe an angel from heaven would have failed. We cannot go into the past and see who is responsible; all that concerns us is to know, in this possible actual present, we have done our duty. The children of many prayers, Christine—the children of devoted love, of pious homes, with mothers and with fathers watching every breath they draw, go strangely and fatally to ruin; from the time they begin to live drawing surely towards their evil end. What it means we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. A few tears, my poor little Christine, but no self-reproach, no vain regrets, no struggling to solve the riddle by unjust accusations and self-condemnation. Be brave as you have always been; be wise and patient.”

“I cannot be patient,” she exclaimed. “Is there nothing more to do? Must we let him go without an effort; is there not a chance that we can bring him back?”

“Not one, I fear. Be reasonable, Christine; all that man can do, I will, to find him and to bring him home; but do not lay up disappointment for yourself. His cunning is beyond belief. He will escape detection and will yet run a long career, it seems to me. Of his personal safety I think you may be reasonably secure. He is not one to risk himself unwisely. Though you may not hear of him, it is reasonable to think that he is safe.”

“His poor mother! what shall I say to her!” murmured Christine in a broken voice.

“Say to her that you have more than done your duty; that if human devotion and self-sacrifice could have atoned for the sinful past, yours would have atoned for it, and her boy would have been saved.”

He spoke in a low voice, with his face turned from her.

At last she rose and drew her cloak about her.

“You will tell my father?” she said, hesitatingly.

“Yes, as soon as it becomes necessary,” he answered, in his

ordinary tone. "In the meantime, say to no one that he is gone. In a few days, when I have made all the investigations that are possible, it may gradually come out that he has gone away—to sea, to join the army, to the West. I will arrange all that. He will escape suspicion, I trust, and that is the one chance there is that he may finally be won back to his home. Some time we may be able to let him know you have lovingly concealed his sin, and that it need not stand between him and a fair life in the future. It is the only hope."

Christine took a step or two towards the door and then paused, and with a painful hesitation said: "I hope you do not blame me for coming to you so—for asking such favors from you. I know it must seem strange. I cannot quite understand how I can do it—but——"

"But you listen to your heart, Christine, which tells you it is right. Continue to believe it, not only for your own sake but for the sake of duty. I have taken upon myself this charge. Do not feel pained to have to call upon me; if you had no interest in him, I should have done the same for him."

Christine raised her head with an involuntary look of surprise. He added, hastily:

"The grandson of Dr. Upham can never be indifferent to me."

She turned hastily away, and pulling her cloak around her, with some half-inaudible words hurried out into the storm.

CHAPTER XLI.

MADELINE SNAPS THE CHAINS.

"Life is too short for logic ; what I do
I must do simply ; God alone must judge,
For God alone shall guide.——
I have snapped opinion's chains, and now I'll soar
Up to the blazing sunlight, and be free."

KINGSLEY.

MADELINE CLYBOURNE was walking up and down her own room like a caged tigress ; her face was pale, her eyes were burning with indignant fire. Mrs. Clybourne, more haggard and thinner than ever before, sat by the window with a fixed though troubled expression, striving to stem the torrent of her daughter's excited words, and to conquer some resolution she had formed.

It was autumn, some six months after Raymond's disgrace and disappearance—six months which had been spent in retirement and silence at the cottage ; and now, for the first time since that event, Mrs. Clybourne had begun to talk to Madeline about going into the world again—about keeping up her position in society—not giving up what they had both worked so hard to obtain—not surrendering upon the first rebuff. It seemed strange that so painful a trial as this had not broken Mrs. Clybourne's spirit ; but the truth was, her ambition had a very deep root, and all this ambition was for Madeline. Of Raymond she had long expected some such thing as this ; she knew him to be utterly unprincipled, and all she had hoped for him for many years had been an exemption from notorious disgrace. When the blow came, she nerved herself to bear it, and she inwardly pledged herself never to give up the fight till she was beaten

back inch by inch from the ground that she had so long disputed. Mrs. Clybourne was not softened by this discipline; how we bear our trials is not a question of the moment; it is as we have spent our lives and fitted ourselves to meet them. Mrs. Clybourne had made herself very strong to resist humiliation and very stubborn to resent the pity of the world.

She had been dreading for some time the effect her wishes might have upon her daughter, but it was now time she knew them. She anticipated a storm, and she was confident she could weather it safely. Mrs. Sherman, just returned from Europe, had written her a very characteristic though kind-hearted letter, telling her to send Madeline to her for the winter, and she would provide for her and take her out into society. This offer proceeded partly from an impulsive goodness of heart which she had not quite worn out, and which was still strong enough to actuate her if the action did not involve any trial to her selfishness; and partly from a desire to have again with her the high-spirited girl with whom she always quarrelled, but who gave a sort of fresh interest to her blazé life.

"Madeline," said her mother, quietly, "if you are perverse and refuse to go to town this winter, let me assure you of one thing—before another comes around you will be forgotten."

"I hope I may be," she said, bitterly. "To be forgotten is the best thing that can happen to those that bear the name of Clybourne. Forgotten! good heavens, they have little to remember of me that I do not want to forget myself; I wish I could blot it all out for ever. I wish I could forget them as they will forget me—forget that I ever was part of so untrue and miserable a life. Mother, you need not ask it of me; I will not go back to it."

"You will behave ungratefully and cruelly then, Madeline. You will repay the care of my whole life most shamefully."

Madeline turned abruptly round and stood still; her face flushed suddenly.

"Mother, I never meant to reproach you with it, I never meant to remind you you had done it; but if you say that—I say—look at me! What have you made me—what have you brought me to! A wretched woman, eating my own heart out with discontent and misery; a useless, frittered mind, an ill-governed, fretful temper, a heart that cries out day and night in its intolerable and bitter loneliness. Mother! your children have disappointed you, but you have had them in your arms: they have filled your time, your thoughts, your love. My father died, but you have the memory of the days when your hearts beat against each other and your lips met in a thousand kisses. But I—I have no memories. I have no hopes, no aims, no duties. You have kept away from me all healthy food, and my soul is starved and savage. It only made my sister weak and puny—it has made me desperate and wicked. You should have judged me better; you should have given me something to stop the gnawing at my heart. I could have done a good work in the world. I am a head and shoulder above other women; I am capable of greater things than they. And what am I now? My soul dwarfed and undeveloped—my intellect wasted—my powers unused—my name disgraced—stung to madness by the failure of my life—and you look at me coldly and say I am ungrateful and undutiful, and tell me to go back to the artificial glare and stifling heat of that place I hated years ago! You tell me to go back and live it all over again—the trifling and the meanness and the falsehood—now since this great shame has fallen on us—now, O mother! No; I will not go back! No; I will defy and set at naught any authority that commands me to do that. You need not ask it of me."

Mrs. Clybourne looked very pale; she was not quite prepared for this; but she had conquered Madeline so many times before through the girl's sense of duty to her and by the force of her own older if not stronger will, that she did not give up.

"Madeline, this is quixotic and absurd. You are saying some very foolish things. You are excited; you will feel differently by and by."

"I am not excited. I should have given you the same answer any time that you had asked me for the six months past."

"I trust too much to your good sense, Madeline, to believe this of you. You talk as if your life were ended, whereas in reality it has just begun. At twenty, and with your beauty——"

"Do not talk to me about my beauty," she cried, passionately. "I hate it; I wish that I had never had it! It is going from me, and you know it. You look at me, when you think I do not notice, with a troubled and unhappy look. No, you have spent your capital—there is nothing left; we must begin the world again impoverished. I hate myself when I look in my glass, when I think of the hours that I have spent before it, the foolish and vain dreams that it has inspired me with. When I remember the thousand times that my fingers have plaited my hair, I loathe it, and long to cut it off and wear a cap, and change myself to my own eyes. I do not care for the world's eyes any longer; approving or disdaining, they have lost their power with me. There is something deeper; there is another life. I have outgrown the other. You cannot crowd my soul down into it again. You must let me live my life now. I have lived yours long enough."

"Never ask my consent," said Mrs. Clybourne, rising to go out, "to withdraw yourself from the world and live a different life from that which your birth and station fit you for. If my authority does not bring you to submit, your own good sense, I trust, will, at last."

Mrs. Clybourne left the room and went down stairs, quite pale and shaken in nerves, but quite confident that she should triumph in the end. She had a good many material considerations, which, presented to Madeline in proper form, could not fail to have their weight. Susie with her five noisy children, and

cumbering, heavy husband, were coming to the cottage next week the last dollar of their badly invested fortune gone, and it would be worse than torture to Madeline to live in the house with them.

Besides, Mrs. Clybourne's slender income would barely supply the family needs; one person less in the household would be a great relief, and Mrs. Sherman's generous offer to provide for all Madeline's wants, could not be thrown aside. Madeline must, should, be brought to reason; "hope springs eternal;" this winter's campaign might restore all, and bring the long looked-for piece of fortune.

The next morning, going into Madeline's room, the mother's courage and high spirit gave way for the first time in all her hard and struggling life. Madeline was gone—with her plainest clothes, half-a-dozen favorite books, a little writing desk, and a tiny work-box that she had had given her when a little girl. A very affectionate but determined letter came to light, promising her mother that she should hear from her, and that in every way that was possible she would respect her wishes; stating that she knew the home resources, and that in no way could she add to them, while she remained at home, or ease her mother's cares. Susie would be more of a comfort to her, she supposed, than she had ever been or ever could be, with their different views. She reminded her mother that she had told her not to ask her consent to what she was about to do, and, knowing that she could not make her see it as she did, she had taken this method of solving the difficulty, and assumed for herself the responsibility of giving up the world. She hoped for brighter days, when she should resume her place by her mother's side, and share with her the hopes and pleasures of a wiser life, if she could but find out where it lay.

All the trials of Mrs. Clybourne's life seemed as nothing when compared with this: she felt that all the promise of this world was over, and sank on her knees by Madeline's empty bed, for the first time an humbled woman.

CHAPTER XLII.

TWO YEARS LATER.

"Surely this is the birthday of no grief,
That dawns so pleasantly along the skies."

Hood.

Two years had passed since then, two long years of anxiety and silence. Julian had not been heard from: the most careful investigation had left it still a mystery whether he had gone abroad or remained in America, calling himself by some other name and disguising his appearance so effectually that none of those upon the watch for him were able to detect him. Raymond Clybourne and Harry Gilmore were less adroit in their concealment; Raymond had been heard of in Havana, and the police had been more than once on the track of Harry, and had lost it.

By some strange good fortune, Julian's name never was associated with theirs, though the nearness of the time of their disappearance would have seemed to warrant it. But Dr. Catherwood had been so careful in disconnecting all traces of Julian with them, and had given so dexterous a coloring to his departure, that all were blinded. The boy had always professed a passion for the sea, and it was very easy to make people receive the impression that he had sailed for the Mediterranean, and would perhaps be absent years, sailing in some vessel that traded between its ports.

At first people were disposed to inquire a good deal about him; but by and by they began to forget to ask, and before the end of these two years he had pretty much died out of

mind, and Christine had very little trouble in evading inquiries about him.

Between her father and herself there was an oppressive silence in respect to him. Sometimes, when her heart ached to bursting with apprehension and yearning, it would have been an unspeakable relief to have thrown herself into her father's arms and wept out her anguish. But since the day when the dreadful news of Julian's crime had been communicated to him, he had been perfectly silent regarding him, and no one had dared to break the silence. His health was sinking slowly but surely; his daughter clung to him more closely each month, as she saw the desolation ahead drawing towards her steadily.

With Dr. Catherwood the silence was almost as oppressive. Since that morning when she had gone to him with the news, there had been a restraint, a coldness between them that it was almost impossible to break through. His manner had lost some of its self-control; he did not seem to trust himself as formerly, and she never could forget the chill of his last words on that morning. Altogether, this last two years had been the saddest and hardest of her life. She had passed through moments of worse anguish in others, but the aggregate of suffering was greater now. While Julian was a present object of anxiety and unhappiness, there was the relief of action and exertion, and, though she did not acknowledge it to herself, the constant support and sympathy of Dr. Catherwood. Now, there was no longer any reason for this, and they were almost strangers. It was the one softening influence of her life withdrawn; she had had no other real sympathy and pleasure, and she felt the loneliness almost insupportable. She knew that her father's life was drawing to its close, and that she could almost count the days that would be soothed by the touch of his living hand. The future looked so dark and desolate; the present was so grey and still. There was a dull monotony about the days that made her sometimes uncontrolla-

bly impatient of them; but at last their monotony was broken, and she repented with a pang of her impatience.

It was November; fires had not been lighted yet; the season was very late; the leaves had yellowed without brilliant tints, and still hung on the trees; the days were mild and hazy; the nights starless and still. It was the morning of the seventh; Christine was sitting by her father's bedside, when he roused himself and said:

"It is time for the mail, my daughter; is it not?"

"Yes, father," she said, rising. "I will put on my bonnet and go down to the office for it. I have an errand in the town, besides."

Dr. Upham's one interest in the outside world now seemed to be the receipt of the daily mail. He had always been particular about hearing from the post-office as soon as it was opened; and he continued to count the moments till some messenger brought him the assurance that nothing of importance had come to him, either through public or private sources. The servants were apt to loiter a little on the way, or not to be so promptly attended to at the office; so Christine knew she pleased her father best by going for the letters and papers herself, and bringing them directly to him. It was a pleasant walk for her sometimes—the only one she had in the course of the day—for most of her time now was demanded by him.

She was a little early this morning, and she loitered rather slowly along the broad, quiet walk, strewn with yellow leaves and shaded with yellow boughs that made an artificial sunshine under the pale, grey sky. — was a pleasant, quiet town even in its busiest streets. The post-office was in the principal one—a large and rather dark building, formerly used as a store-house. There was a great square room in front where people waited for their letters, and where men read the papers; and at the back of it ran a partition that shut off the

office proper, and in which was the window through which the mail matter was delivered.

Just as Christine reached the door of the office, there was a noise and excitement in the cross-street below, a rush to the door of the people waiting for the mail, and she was obliged to give way and step back on the pavement and gaze with the gazing crowd towards the scene of the excitement. I was only a moment's sight, and Christine hardly comprehended it.

A cart rolled along, followed by men and boys, who were drawn after it by curiosity alone, for they were mostly silent, and only the noise of their feet was heard shuffling and trampling upon the pavement. In the cart there was some one struggling and screaming—a woman's voice, smothered and silenced by those who held her, and then bursting out shrill and piercing. Christine did not see her face; sickened and frightened, she turned away from the sight. There were some exclamations and a good many shrugs and shakings of the head as the people turned back and re-entered the office.

The mail was not open yet. Christine thought she would go out and walk for a few moments, but she feared coming upon the horrid sight again, and in truth it had made her so faint she scarcely dared trust herself to walk at once; so she took a seat that some one kindly placed for her and waited, listening meanwhile to the talk of those around her.

Near her stood a well-dressed, quiet-looking woman, who was asking the man beside her who it was they were carrying off on the cart, and what the matter with her was.

"Why," said the man, who seemed very much pleased to find some one who had not heard all about the occurrence "that was Phœbe Gilmore, whom they are carrying to the mad-house. She's been half-crazy for three years or more. I suppose you've often seen her round the streets?"

"No," said the woman, sedately; "I'm a stranger in the

place. I never saw her to my knowledge. What set her off worse at last?"

"Why," said the man, laying down his yesterday's paper across his knee and smoothing it out with a good deal of care, "that man that was found murdered by the dam this morning was her son, yousee; and from the minute that they took the body home there was no two men could hold her. She's given the sheriff a wound he'll bear the scar of to his dying day, and she'll do more mischief, I'm afraid, before they get her locked up, for she's like a tiger."

"And so it was her son that was killed," said the woman, with interest; she was not so great a stranger but that she had heard of that.

"Yes, poor fellow! He wasn't much of a loss to her or to the town, for he's been in mischief ever since he wore frocks; but it's hard upon a woman to have to see her own flesh and blood backed up and murdered in that awful way."

"They found him down by the dam, didn't they?" said the woman, evidently anxious for any new particulars that might come to light in the man's rendering of the story.

"Beyond the dam, down in a well that belongs to the old house the Gilmores used to live in when Richard kept the mill. He'd made a good fight for it, poor fellow, by the looks of things around the well. There was blood and the deep marks of their boots in the ground half-a-dozen yards back from it where they wrestled; it must have been after night-fall and as black as tar. And there are marks of blood upon the curb where he clung to it with his hands, and his fingers were all mangled dreadfully where the fellow stamped upon 'em to make him let go his hold and fall. The well was dry and full of stones, and the fal did up the work."

"It is the worst thing I ever heard of," said the woman, looking a little pale, but not willing to give the subject up; "and they haven't got much idea who it was they say?"

"The whole of what they've got to go upon is this," said the man, folding his newspaper up tight and slapping it upon his hands: "There is a fellow up here at the Factory, Jarvis by name (a drinking man, by the way, and not the best sort of a witness to go upon the stand), who swears, as he was going out on the Turnsbury road last night, he saw two men coming towards the dam. It's a pretty lonesome road, and was almost night-fall, and as there were two of them, Jarvis most likely did not let the grass grow under his feet as he went past 'em. He'll swear to young Gilmore, which don't do much good, considering all the town has a chance of swearing to him, poor fellow; but about the fellow with him, he can only say he was a little slighter than Harry, and dressed in sailor's clothes like him. His face was turned away from him, and so he can't say anything at all about his face. He don't think they either of them saw him, or took much notice of him if they did, for there were high words going on between them, and the quarrel had begun, no doubt. He can't testify to anything he heard 'em say, so I take it he was pretty badly scared, and made all the hurry he knew how. There hasn't been a trace found as yet; but they're working hard for it, I can tell you. The town 'll turn out to a man before they let him go; for though Harry Gilmore wasn't any great credit to it ever, folks don't like to feel there can be murder done so near their doors and nobody be found to swing for it."

The man slapped the newspaper down again upon his open palm, and moved away towards the window of the office, open now for the distribution of the mail. Almost all the people waiting had been served and had gone away before Christine rose from her seat and went up to the window. The clerk was a young man who had rather a chivalrous admiration for the beautiful young lady who came every day for her father's letters, and he noticed with concern that she looked pale and ill. Nobody else noticed it, though, and she went home through

an unfrequented street and across the churchyard, and up to her own room, without meeting any of the household.

"You are late, Christine," said her father, gently, as she entered the room with the papers in her hand.

"A little, perhaps," she said, bending down to kiss him. She read the papers through, and sat by him with her work in her hand as usual.

What long hours, though, they were till Dr. Catherwood came and took her place and left her at liberty to be alone awhile. She always left the room a few minutes after he entered it; to-day he looked at her a little anxiously, but she avoided his eye, and went out. When he came down stairs after his hour with Dr. Upham, he went towards the parlor with some idea that he might find her there. But she was occupied with visitors, and he merely said a few words of commonplace and went away.

There were a great many visitors at the Parsonage that day; some who came from the ordinary impulses of idleness, of civility, of kindness; some who came on business, and one or two who came for pure gossip, and to talk over the crime and horror of the day. All, from whatever motives they came, talked of it, and Christine felt as if she should go mad and be Phœbe Gilmore's maniac companion if they did not go away and leave her, and cease their hideous conjecturing. The impression she gave to most of her visitors was, that she felt very little interest in the affair in any way, and that she was rather cold and quiet in her manners when any sort of gossip was discussed.

In the afternoon when Dr. Catherwood came again he seemed of a different mind, and did not seek an interview with her. He saw that by this time she had heard the news, and that his hope of telling it to her and softening the shock was over. He stayed a long time with Dr. Upham that afternoon, reading a new political pamphlet to him, and leaving him even

more than ever cheered and diverted by his visit. He passed Christine on the stairs with his old half-affectionate, half-cheery smile, and went out into the street with a haggard and suffering face.

That evening the little Dean, *née* Richfield, came and volunteered to remain to tea. She had two or three more babies by this time, and as they had a great many teeth to get among them, and a great deal of croup and whooping-cough and measles and fever to go through, she did not enjoy them quite as much as she did the first one, and felt in fact a good deal bored by having to stay at home so much and being waked up so many times at night. She was very fond of coming to see Christine and complaining of her troubles, as at first she had been very fond of coming to her and boasting of her pleasures. Christine was generally patience and gentleness itself with her; in fact, she was so sympathetic she really felt the little woman was hardly used by fate in having such a host of duties to perform for which she was no more fitted than a kitten.

But this evening her puny, whining troubles seemed contemptible to Christine; she could not offer anything but silence and endurance. She hoped that she would have thought it her duty to go home early to the children; but it was ten o'clock before she said anything about returning to her nursery cares. She had just rung the bell for her carriage and was putting on her cloak, when it seemed to dawn upon her that Christine looked weary and unhappy.

"Now, Christine, dear," she said, "I am afraid that I have bored you a little bit this evening. But really you can form no idea what a life mine is; and it seems very natural to us married women to come to you unmarried ones, who have no cares to weigh upon you, to get a little repose and quiet. My dear, if you should ever marry, you will know what responsibilities life has; you cannot have the least idea of it till you do."

"I suppose not," said Christine, with a faint smile. This seemed such supreme irony, she could not say anything else.

As she went to the door with her and kissed her good-night upon the steps, a boy came in at the gate and approached her slowly.

"Do you want me?" said Christine, as the boy stood looking at her stupidly. "It is you, Tom; is it? Well, come up and tell me what it is."

Mrs. Dean got into the carriage and drove off, and Tom came up the steps. He was a dirty, ragged fellow, for whom Christine had a kindness, and who had been a scholar of hers when younger. He always seemed shy of her; but he had a very strong admiration for her, and thought in his clumsy way that if she should ever touch his arm or his hair with that beautiful white hand of hers, as she used to do sometimes, he should not know how to conduct himself he should be so excited. He never managed to speak above a whisper in her presence, and looked so stupid and confused whenever she addressed him, that she had almost given up saying anything to him beyond an unsuggestive *How are you, Tom?* with her involuntarily sweet smile. He stood by the door struggling with his diffidence; suddenly he plunged his hand into his pocket, and, drawing out a scrap of paper, held it towards her.

"You mustn't tell," he faltered, "that I brought it to you; and I mustn't either, the man said."

"What man, Tom?" said Christine, in a low tone, feeling her limbs giving way beneath her and resting her hand against the door.

"The man down there," he said, pointing in the direction of the mill-dam. "He crawled out of the woods and called me. He's very bad, I guess. He told me to bring it to you, and I mustn't ever tell."

All this was delivered in a thick whisper, with a choking of the breath between the pauses.

"And you never must," said Christine, laying her hand upon his arm. "Promise me, Tom, you never will. I have always liked you, and I believe you will do this thing for me."

"You needn't be afraid," he stammered, in a tremor of confusion, starting down the steps.

Christine went in the parlor to the light. Her heart was throbbing frightfully, and there was a cloud before her eyes. It was several minutes before she could read the few words scrawled upon the paper. They were very few, and there was no name; there needed none; she wanted no assurance who had sent for her. She sat down, stunned and trembling, and tried to be silent and to think. Her father's bell rang, and glancing at the clock, she saw that the hour was past when she ordinarily read prayers by his bed, and made the thousand minute arrangements for the night which recur so monotonously in the sick-room.

"You are late, Christine," her father said, for the second time that day. His tone was very gentle and not reproachful; only one of surprise that she could possibly have failed to anticipate him as she always did.

It was easy to say the prayers; her whole soul was one wild prayer; but it was not so easy to spend the long hour that was needful in the adjustment of the apartment for the night, in the arrangement of innumerable meaningless details. When at last she stooped to kiss him, he put his hand upon her head, as he ever did, and said:

"Good-night, my child. God bless you always!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

MIDNIGHT IN HARRY'S OLD HOME.

"In all the mansions of the house on high,
Say not that Mercy has not one for him."

HOLMES.

THE lamps were not burning in the streets of — that night at twelve o'clock, for the moon was due, and it was not the fault of the municipal rulers if it did not shine. Therefore it was not surprising that of the four thousand souls in the town not one had any knowledge of, or interest in, the slight figure in the grey cloak that stole along in the thick shadow of the houses through the least frequented streets and out into the western suburbs, in the direction of the lonely mill. The town had been growing since the night Julian was dragged senseless out of the ice-covered pond, but it had grown away from it, in another direction; and all this road was as lonely and as unfrequented as it was then, when Christine, then as now, hurried along it with a beating, anxious heart. She could hardly believe the direction that the note had given her; but the only thing she could do was implicitly to follow it. The scene of the murder was not the most probable place in which to seek the murderer; perhaps this was the reason that she had been told to come to the miller's house to meet him; but it was a terrible place of rendezvous—were his nerves of iron that he could bear it!

She reached the limit of the fence that bounded the enclosure of the old place, and paused to listen. No one was following her;

there was no sound but the rush of the water over the dam—

“The air was hushed and still and close
As a sick man's room, when he taketh repose
An hour before death.”

She pushed her way through a broken part of the fence, crossed the old garden—rank weeds, dry and brittle, breaking and crackling at every step. At last she found her way into what had once been the centre path of the garden, where the weeds were not so thick. She had avoided entering by the gate in the front of the house, not only because she felt this to be the more secret and safer way, but because she dreaded the sight of the old well, where, not twenty-four hours before, the brutal and revolting deed had been committed. She did not know exactly where it stood; it was long since she had been in this enclosure, but she fancied the well stood at the other side of the house, in view from the gate, if she had gone in that way.

With a feeling of sudden horror, as if the scene of last night had been brought before her eyes, she found herself confronting the spot she had avoided. The long sweep of the well-pole was visible dimly against the sky, standing like a giant gallows over the broken curb and ruined well. The blood seemed to curdle in her veins. She could hardly persuade herself she did not hear the smothered cries for help; the curses, the blows, the deadly, fatal fall.

The scene in the old mill, on that beautiful August evening years ago, mixed itself up strangely with this one of her imagination. The thrill of horror with which she had watched helplessly the struggle between the boys, the mingled sense of relief and terror with which she had seen Julian triumph and heard poor Harry fall, all these things came back to her as vividly as if to-night's sun had just gone down upon them. She had prayed unarticulately and instinctively for Julian's

safety, as she watched them. And Julian had been saved—for this—for shame and everlasting contempt—for a crime which made even her strong faith falter. Oh, that he instead of Harry had gone down! That the waves had closed over and choked his breath before it had polluted his whole life with falsehood—that his soul in its comparative innocence had been taken away from the evil to come! How should she meet him—how touch the hand that had done such a fearful deed of wickedness?

She turned her head away from the gloomy object that stretched across her path, and hurried towards the house.

The neglected vines, that had nearly framed themselves across the porch, had since the morning been rudely torn away to afford entrance for men and officers who had searched it from garret to cellar, and had gone away and pronounced it undisturbed for months. As she pushed open the door softly and made her way across the desolate kitchen, she thought of poor Phœbe in her narrow cell, and Richard mouldering in his lonely grave, and Harry lying above-ground for the last time to-night, a murdered, mangled corpse. She remembered the cheerful, well-kept room of old, the bright fire, the shining window-panes, the father's easy content, the mother's thrift and energy, the boy's beauty and health; this was all surely some frightful dream from which she should awake.

She made her way carefully across the room with outstretched hands, feeling for the door that led up to the little kitchen chamber. Her hand touched the latch; she lifted it and began to ascend the stairs—where Harry's feet had climbed so often, where Phœbe's energetic tread had so many times resounded. She did not feel fear, but a dazzling, unsettling sense of horror and of sin.

The room was bare of furniture, but several boxes stood in it, and some rubbish lay upon the floor. The two dormer windows, open to the sky, admitted the faintest light, not much

more than enough to show Christine where she stood, and what was within reach of her hand. A dark object in one corner below the window moved; and yet, sure of it as she was, she heard no sound. She dared not speak; in fact, at that moment, she could not have commanded voice enough to articulate a word. She began to be afraid for herself, a thought that had not crossed her mind before. There was some living being in this room with her, this lonely, smothering place; if it were Julian, he would speak; if it were he who had sent for her, he would know that she was come.

Several minutes passed. The dark object in the corner, which Christine now distinctly discerned to be the figure of a man half-raised from the floor, did not stir a hair's breadth.

This figure seemed to her so much larger than she remembered Julian; she only longed for strength to go away; for when she tried to move, she found herself in a helpless and benumbed condition. The weakness of her limbs had come very suddenly, with the first doubt of Julian's presence and the first throb of personal fear. At last she made a few hurried, uncertain steps towards the door, and then, through the giddy and wild fluttering of her nerves that almost deafened her, she heard her name pronounced. She stopped, and steadying herself by grasping the post of the door by which she stood, turned back her head and listened. After a moment it was repeated in a husky and strange voice. She looked towards the corner; with a groan the man had sunk down again upon the floor, and all was silent.

* * * * *

An hour later, Christine was standing alone upon the porch of Dr. Catherwood's cottage. A light was shining through the half-closed shutters of the little parlor, and, putting aside the vines and looking in, she saw Dr. Catherwood pacing up and down the room. She could not see his face, for the light was low; she could only conjecture from his restless

movements that some deep anxiety was keeping him from sleep. He started as she touched the window lightly, and coming forward quickly, opened it.

The window was a casement that opened to the floor; he gave a look of surprise as he beheld Christine standing before it. She entered hastily, and, pushing the window to behind her, said, in the breathless voice of one who has an overpowering fear and wish, and who forgets effects and preliminaries and explanations :

"There is not a moment to be lost—it will be daylight soon—some place must be found—he is hiding in the miller's house—and that is madness, you must see."

"You forget I do not know what you are talking of," said her companion, huskily.

Christine saw on his face the look of sickening pain that she had seen when she told him of Julian's theft; he must have said this only to gain time. She knew that, as well as this, was no surprise to him; but it seemed as if the certainty drove home a stab that staggered him.

"You do not guess?" she said with a shudder, sinking down into a chair. "Oh, do not make me tell you—it is too awful."

"No, you need not tell me," he said, turning from her and walking once or twice across the floor. Christine bowed her face down upon the table before her and burst into tears.

"Christine," whispered her companion, bending over her, struck with remorse at his own share in this, having made her speak when he should have sustained her and forgotten himself. "Christine, poor child! forgive me; I know it all. I want your help—you must not give way—restrain yourself, and let me tell you what to do—there is no time to lose."

"No, no—there was no time to lose, but I have lost it. I cannot do anything—I have come to the end of my endurance—I—I am worse than helpless—I have no strength—no mind—no thought."

It was too true, her strength and fortitude had given way, and she was helpless; she had staggered under her terrible burden, till, throwing it into stronger hands, she had sunk down fainting and undone. Dr. Catherwood stooped over her with a tenderness that was almost agony; he pressed his lips upon her hair, and grasped her slender wrists, and tried to draw her hands back from her face, reassuring and comforting her with broken words of endearment and of sympathy. At last the paroxysm of grief passed, and exhausted and almost fainting, her head fell back upon his shoulder and her eyes closed. That poor, tear-stained, pale, and wretched face—it wrung his heart to look down at it. He folded his arms about her, and carrying her to a sofa, laid her gently on it. For a few moments he thought that it was worse than fainting; he forgot the terrible hurry and the coming daylight in his anxiety to feel the beating of her heart again, and see the light of consciousness in her half-closed eyes. At last she opened them and fixed them on him.

“Go to him,” she whispered. “He is wounded—he is very ill, and needs you.”

“I will go at once,” he answered, rising; “and, Christine, try to dismiss all anxiety for him if you can. I will save him if he can be saved.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

A DEATH-BED.

—“*Quis talia fando
Temperet à lacrymis ?*”

VIRG. *ÆN.* II. 6.

It was a dark, still night again ; the third terrible and oppressive night since this new trial had begun. In the long room that faced the parlor, in Dr. Catherwood's little house, Christine sat by the bedside of Julian, watching what she knew, and what Dr. Catherwood knew, were his last moments. He had sent Harry into eternity, but Harry had sworn with his dying breath he should follow him before many days were over.

It had been a fierce and desperate reckoning between them. None ever knew the chance word or threat that had lighted the fatal quarrel. Harry had fallen, the victim as ever, but had left his revenge assured. Stubborn, silent, Julian was meeting his fate. His sufferings were so great there was no chance to talk to him of preparation ; all that could be done was to alleviate them as far as practicable and save the moments for him, if possibly at the end there might be some quiet for repentance. He had suffered great agony in the removal to where he now was ; it had been accomplished, though, with entire secrecy and safety, and no one guessed, save the woman who was Dr. Catherwood's only servant, that the open, smiling, pleasant cottage held the murderer whom all the town were hunting for. Christine had come down at night, across the fields, and had not been seen by any one, and had gone back in the grey dawn before there was a waking soul in —.

This enforced stillness and darkness and secrecy made the sick-room doubly awful; the sight of Julian's sufferings, and the certainty of their end, would have made it terrible enough, but the constant fear that disgrace and punishment might invade it, added to its gloom a thousand shades of blackness.

It was eleven o'clock. The room was still as if vacant, save for the labored and irregular breath of the sufferer on the bed; Christine, with one arm beneath his pillow, knelt beside him, trying to ease the agony of his respirations by a change of attitude; Dr. Catherwood, with his hand upon the wrist that was lying on the coverlet relaxed and almost pulseless, was looking in his face with keen and breathless scrutiny; the woman beside them held the shaded lamp so that it fell upon his features.

There was no fear now of troubling him by its glare; the blindness of death was creeping fast over his open eyes—the dimness of the dark prison was already closing round his senses. The great drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead and upon his lips; a harsh expression of suffering settled round his mouth, a livid color spread itself over his face; there was no room to doubt, the dissolution of soul, and body was at hand. Sinning soul and polluted body, the one to be hurried into high and irrevocable eternity, the other to be laid in the corrupting grave waiting for the resurrection of condemnation, the reward of shame and everlasting contempt—the inheritance of those who have despised salvation; and not one prayer, not one moment for thought and retrospect and penitence—only the dreadful struggle, only dying, revolting, tortured nature. Christine had seen one death-bed before; how many features were repeated here; how much of that hopeless scene came back to add to the gloom of this!

Presently, across the darkness of the room (for, excepting when the light of the shaded lamp fell upon the bed, there was utter darkness), there came the gleam of a lantern past the

window, left open to give air to the suffocating sufferer, and the stillness was broken by the sound of steps upon the walk outside, and men's voices, and a pause before the door.

The thrill that this disturbance gave to those within was indescribable. A moment before, the awe was of another and a grander kind; the thought of eternity, even in its form of dread, ennobles the mind; this sudden shock of human fear, of worldly panic, of the commonplace and tangible, rushing in upon the unknown and the vast, created a reaction that was very painful. Dr. Catherwood started to his feet and motioned Rebecca to the door. Christine felt that the tremor that passed through her communicated some dim idea of danger to the dying boy whom she supported. She felt his breath choke for a moment; he raised his head. The woman had taken the lamp with her in her alarm. Dr. Catherwood had followed her quickly to the door; they were both outside it now, parleying with the new comers. Christine was alone in darkness with the dying. She felt him sinking back upon her heavily. He gasped:

"They're coming after me—they're here. Christine, you mustn't leave me—you must save me."

There was a spasmodic movement—a sudden clenching of the hands, a sudden relaxation; the head fell back, the breath came with a low, wailing gasp, and then came no more. Christine's shoulder pillowed a lifeless corpse; the awful moment of mystery had come in the silence and darkness while she alone was by him.

She knelt, chilled with awe, while the human voices outside mixed strangely with the unearthly voices that her soul seemed to hear in the dark, still air above her where the last breath of the dead boy floated. "Christine, you must save me." "Promise me, promise me on your knees that you will live for him." Helena's dying, livid face and white attenuated hands seemed so actual and so vivid to her that she felt every moment

a horror of their touch. What was she saying now?—welcoming her lost boy to his eternal woe. Bars, bars black and huge across the deep blackness of the sky, seemed to have risen up to keep those two lost souls apart. Christine's heart died with fear, longing to turn away and not to see; but the eyes of the soul cannot be shut. She could not pray. The moments seemed like days, while she was kneeling frozen into stone, fighting away that vision. She could hear the steps of those who had come in, on the floor above and through the hall. She knew they were searching the house, looking for him whom she held in her arms; but *that* seemed the unreal, these faces gathering blackness in the air above her seemed the real.

At last—the spell was broken—the door opened, and Rebecca entered, bringing a dim light. Christine staggered to her feet. The woman motioned her quickly to a door, opening into a lobby, that stood half open.

"They insist on coming in," she said, hastily, taking her place beside the bed, and drawing the light away so that it should not fall upon it.

Christine mechanically obeyed her, and half drew the door shut after her. The men from the hall entered by the other door; the foremost one was saying in a manner of apology:

"You know, Dr. Catherwood, this seems rather hard to be intruding on you at a time like this; but people will talk, and since it had got round that there had been some one seen coming out of here at night, why it seemed just as well to satisfy them and go through the house. A man respected in the town like you, Dr. Catherwood, of course don't fall under any suspicion of harboring the criminal, but it might have been without your knowledge, and you see——"

"Of course; I understand you," said Dr. Catherwood, in a firm, low tone. "You have done perfectly right; all the other parts of the house are searched; in this room, I will give you my oath, there is no one but my son, now lying at the point of

death, and the woman who is in attendance on him. If you can spare me the pain of disturbing him by the search, I will thank you; if not, then let me ask you to make the time as short as possible."

The men, touched by his tone and manner, and by the glance they had of the figure on the bed in the dim and solemn light, turned back and went into the hall, followed by Dr. Catherwood. They were talking to him as they paused in the lobby into which Christine had retreated. She shrank into the shade, and heard with bewildered incredulity their words and those of Dr. Catherwood. One man, apparently the officer, for he seemed to be the spokesman, was saying, as they approached the lobby, that it was a disagreeable task, and he hoped Dr. Catherwood had no ill feeling towards them for intruding; he only wanted to do his duty, and so he must ask him to repeat, on oath, the statement he had made just then within.

Dr. Catherwood then repeated, on oath and with distinctness, that the room out of which they had just come, contained no one besides those named by him before—his son, Francis Catherwood, aged nineteen, recently returned from Germany, now lying dangerously ill of hæmorrhage; and the woman, Rebecca Alstan, employed in attendance on him. The man bowed in silence and moved towards the door with his two subordinates; there was something in Dr. Catherwood's manner that made further questioning impossible, official or personally inquisitive; he occupied a position among his townsmen that made these petty officers feel their duty in this case an involuntary impertinence. Whatever there was in Dr. Catherwood's statement that would have staggered them coming from a less respected man, seemed unquestionable from him.

After a few words of rather clumsy condolence and apology, they left the house; Rebecca started up from her position by the bedside as she heard the outer door close, and hurried into the hall; Christine, half unconscious of what she did, went back

into the room, standing in Rebecca's place at the head of the bed, as if the poor wretch lying on it still needed an attendant. Rebecca had left the light upon the table; it was shining faintly now upon the bed.

Dr. Catherwood entered from the hall, and stopped midway in the room, for he saw the face upon the bed in its ghastly and settled sleep. His expression had been very haggard and worn before he caught that sight; it changed slowly, very slowly, into something worse and of deeper suffering. He almost staggered to the bed, and, resting his hand upon the foot of it, gazed long at the lifeless body. At last he raised his eyes and met Christine's fixed upon him with the expression of a person just recovering consciousness gaspingly, after a hideous dream.

"You do not mean," she said, almost in a whisper, with her wide open eyes fixed upon him, "that what you told those men is true?"

"Yes, Christine," he answered in a hollow voice, leaning forward, his hands clasped upon the foot of the bed. "It is true—that poor boy is mine—your unhappy sister was my wife. God forgive us both! We were two children—two wilful, wicked children. We have gone through deep waters since those days."

The long, dead past seemed to have come back to him, some sudden revelation of memory; he leaned his head down in his hands and was silent. When he looked up, Christine had fallen on her knees beside the bed, and had hidden her face in her hands; but when he approached her, she started up and shrank away from him.

"I want to go away from here," she said in a smothered, agitated voice, making her way towards the door with trepidation.

"One word, Christine," he said, in a tone of supplication, putting his hand out to stop her; but she avoided him and was gone before he could say another word. He turned back, sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

CHAPTER XLV.

DUST TO DUST.

"The slumberer's mound grows fresh and green,
Then slowly disappears ;
The mosses creep, the grey stones lean,
Earth hides his days and years ;
But long before the once loved name
Is sunk or worn away,
No lip the silent dust may claim
That pressed the breathing clay."

THE bell was tolling, "a slow set bell;" the grey, dull November afternoon was drawing to its close. The first sound of it had fallen upon Christine's heart like a heavy, deadening blow; she was standing by her father's bedside when it began to ring, and she started hurriedly to leave the room.

"Don't go away, my child," he said, feebly, reaching out his hand. For two days he had been far weaker and worse than Christine had ever seen him before.

"I will not go, father," she said, in a smothered voice, taking his hand with a caress, and then going to the window.

This window overlooked the garden and the churchyard. The leaves had fallen from the trees, and there was nothing to hide the sight of the funeral train as it entered the gate and paused at the church door, met by the priest in his white robes with the open book in his hand. Christine stood leaning her face against the pane and gazing at the solemn sight in stupefied and dull despair. This double death, this strange truth and apparent falsehood, bewildered her and made her uncertain of all things save the terrors of eternity; and on them her mind

had dwelt till it had become benumbed. That bell that had just stopped tolling, and had called so many people into church, was acting its part in the great falsehood; and the minister, with the solemn words of burial on his lips, was helping to cover up the crime; the coffin lid, the pall with its heavy, mournful folds—what brave and mocking hypocrisies they were! And yet, what was false, except the life in which for so many years she had had part! That body, over whom the priest was saying holy words, was the body of the only son of him who walked behind it with such a haggard face. The plate that bore the words—

“FRANCIS CATHERWOOD,
Born at Strasbourg, Oct. 19th, 18—,
Died at ———, November 17th, 18—,”

told the truth; the lips that had said Julian Upham all these years had told the lie.

And yet, while

“All the congregation sang
A Christian psalm for him,”

while consecrated ground was broken to receive his body, his soul—black with the crime of murder, stained with a thousand sins of inclination and of choice—was far beyond the reach of prayers. The kind friends of him who was the only mourner, fancied they stood beside the coffin of a stranger, one long absent from his father's home, only returned to it to die; when, in reality, its lid covered a face that had been familiar to old and young in the town, before sin and suffering had effaced the last traces of youth and fairness from it.

The father's high name and honor had been the son's shield dying and in death. No word of doubt or of suspicion went abroad; that Dr. Catherwood had a son living, had been a married man, excited wonder. But there had been nothing in his life among them to justify any one in making his conceal-

ment of it a reproach or scandal. Generous of sympathy and kindness to others, he had always maintained a reserve about that which concerned himself and his past history, that had rather given the impression he might some day appear in a different light. No one could blame him that he had chosen to be silent when he had never made any pretence of openness. The explanation that he gave to the few friends who came to him in this trial, was very simple and concise, and meant for the ear of the world, which in due course it reached.

This son of an early marriage had been separated from him for years by unavoidable circumstances; had lived among the family of his mother, who had died while he was still a child, and had earnestly requested he should be brought up by them. He had received word from them to meet the boy, who arrived from Germany, and was brought to his father's house only to die. He had inherited pulmonary weakness from his mother, and aggravating circumstances had hastened the disease.

However much further friends and gossips desired to go, they never ventured beyond that limit, for Dr. Catherwood understood, better than most men, governing conversation, and holding the minds of those with whom he talked in check. It is rather a delicate matter to ask any man who his wife was, who has been dead a dozen or so of years, and what the aggravating circumstances were which hastened his child's decease. From these materials, which were strictly all that any one was possessed of, there was built up a theory, which, in a little while, took the proportions of a family history, and which sounded very much as follows: Dr. Catherwood, travelling abroad when very young, had seen and fallen in love with a beautiful young German girl, the daughter of a watchmaker, who had married him, borne him one child, and died, requesting on her death-bed that her child might be brought up in her own country and by her own family. Dr. Catherwood, too generous to disregard her wish, and too refined to live in the watchmaker's family .

himself, had settled a handsome annuity upon the child and given him up to them. The "aggravating circumstances" were variously stated. Some said the watchmaker had proved a villain, and had maltreated the boy while he benefited by the annuity; others suspected that the boy himself had not turned out well, and that he had been sent to the father to reform when his health was deeply injured by his reckless habits while it was imagined by some that the voyage had been a very trying one, and that the lad's ignorance and inexperience had subjected him to much exposure by the way.

All this was circulated freely in the town, and the result was, more interest than ever felt in the favorite doctor, and more people present at the church on the day of his son's burial than often came together for a week-day service. Indeed this new topic almost superseded that which ten days ago had been so absorbing, and poor Harry seemed in the way to be forgotten and unavenged. People had settled down into the belief that the murder had been committed by some rough sailor comrade, hanging about him with the hope of plundering him of the wages of his last long voyage, and escaped beyond pursuit hours before the murder was discovered. Everything proper and energetic seemed to have been done, and, as yet, with no result; the story grew to be an old one, and people lost their zest about it. They grew to be certain, in their own minds, that the murderer was hundreds of miles out at sea by this time, little suspecting that they had buried him with honors in the churchyard of St. Philip's.

"For whom do they ring that bell, my child?" said the old Rector, feebly, turning his head upon the pillow in the direction of the window.

"Don't you remember, father," returned Christine, in a husky voice, "I told you about Dr. Catherwood's son?"

"Oh, yes, I recollect," he answered, with a sigh; "I am

always giving you the trouble to repeat ; my memory is sharing the debility of my frame, I see. But this son—it does not surprise me. I always believed he had a history ; he never showed a disposition to be candid. Poor Catherwood ! I doubt not there has been suffering—he interested me deeply from the first. He has such an appreciation of domestic pleasures and such strong powers of affection, that it must have been something very stern that kept him from this boy, just at the age to be a solace and pleasure to him. Ah ! It seems to explain to me the deep interest that he always took in our poor Julian.”

Dr. Upham’s voice sank ; Christine knew he would say no more. Whenever any allusion to his grandson escaped him, it was followed by a sudden and painful silence.

This silence Christine broke by a low, involuntary moan ; she had listened to the deep, solemn roll of the organ, and she almost fancied that she heard the full responses of the people and the strong voice of the minister as he pronounced the prayers ; presently there came a lull and then a tramp of feet along the aisle, and they came out from the side door of the church, following the corpse to the broken sod and the fresh gravel heap below Helena’s grave. Christine sank down on her knees and tried to follow the prayers ; it was not till the grating sound struck her ear, of the ropes against the coffin and the scattered gravel rattling on it, as they lowered it down into the earth, that she gave that low cry, and shuddering and sobbing, hurried out of the room.

That poor sinner whom they were burying out of sight, was her little orphaned charge, her darling Julian—the yellow-haired boy whom she had held tight against her heart while they buried his poor mother, not ten feet from where they were laying him down now. All the sin, the pollution, the punishment, was forgotten ; the natural human grief was breaking out, and sobbing and shuddering upon her bed, Christine was in a safer and better condition of mind than she had been for many days before.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A LETTER.

"If in his cheek unholy blood
Burned for one youthful hour,
'Twas but the flushing of the bud
That blooms a milk-white flower."

HOLMES.

Two days passed; the Rector wondered that Dr. Catherwood had not yet remembered him and overcome his grief enough to pay him his accustomed visit; Christine wondered how she should meet him, and what the next step must be. She did not conjecture very much about it. Even now she had the feeling, from long habit, of depending upon him for placing their relations rightly.

But every ring at the bell, every foot upon the stair, gave her a strange sensation of excitement, and brought the question to her mind, "Can I meet him calmly now?" and every assurance that it was not he, found her a little weaker and less nerved to meet him.

Dr. Upham needed him very much; he had become dependent on his daily visit, and his two last nights had been very restless; he said more than once to Christine that he thought it would be best to send down a messenger to the cottage.

"Wait an hour or two; see if he does not come," she said soothingly; and in that way she pleaded off till twilight.

She had gone out into the hall for the purpose of summoning Ann to go down to the Doctor's cottage, when she met Ann with a letter in her hand

"Dr. Catherwood's man just brought this for you, Miss Christine," she said, and Christine turned silently back into her own room, wondering that she had not thought that this would be the way before; it was very certain to her, before she read the letter, that she should not be called upon to meet Dr. Catherwood again. She lit a candle slowly, and sat down to read it at a table upon which there were pens and ink and a desk full of other letters. There was no fire in the room and it was very chilly, but she did not feel it at all; she felt burning hot, and her hands were feverish and unsteady as she broke the seal :

"No doubt you have expected before this some explanation from me, some palliating story of the long hypocrisy that has just come to an end. I have not much to tell you that you do not know or may not guess. I do not anticipate working any change in your feelings towards me, but I will go through the form of telling you that I do not blame myself as much as you blame me, and that I am certain some time you will look back to this and say your horror and aversion were misplaced. Your sister lies dead and silent in the churchyard near your home, Christine; I shall henceforth be as silent to you and be further off than she. I do not accuse her. I do not reproach the dead; she has put on immortality, and I am only now a mortal man; the most holy Judge eternal will decide between us in the world to come. It is years since I have had a vindictive feeling in my heart. Forgiveness has been more the habit of my mind than the expression of my lips; but with lip and pen, and in every mode of reparation possible to me, I have committed myself to it. I would have died for her boy. I lived for him, as you know, though he hated me as if his mother's soul were animating him. Sometimes I wonder how it could have been, when I loved that baby with such tenderness, when I loved the mother with such passion.

"But that was long ago. The farther I go back, the more self-reproach there is, and it is right you should hear that.

"I was not twenty when I married; we were both children. Helena's character, if I can give it to you dispassionately, was a singularly unhappy one to be committed to the life that lay before us. She was totally without discipline; and she had lived in a home of religious faith without imbibing a single principle of religion. I cannot account for it; as far as I ever saw into her heart, it was all heathen. When I first began to realize her after we were married, I fancied her bright and volatile and without strong feelings. There was a bubble and sparkle of vanity and coquetry upon the surface that made me think the tide was shallow. But it was the bubble and sparkle of a maelstrom; a stronger nature I have never seen; a strength of selfishness and a power of hatred that I have never met in man or woman since; and a power of love, too, which her absorbing passion for her child revealed. But I did not know that it was there; I never was able to call it out. I think she fancied that she loved me when we married; my affection for her was unbounded, but it was jealous and exacting, like a boy's affection. She never understood me; her love had the very briefest existence. We had not been a month in the gay society of Paris before I found she was dissatisfied, wearied by the hours we spent together, and always seeking for excitement, and sometimes excitement not innocent and justifiable for a young wife to seek. The discovery was maddening to me, undisciplined as herself, and loving her with an unreasoning love.

"There begins the sin. I have a terrible recollection of the storm that succeeded the night that she first openly defied my jealousy and showed me her indifference. My conduct after that justified all she could have said about it. I was a madman. I made every moment of her life a torture to her, as mine was to me. I forbade her society. I watched her day and night;

but a word from her would have changed all. She never spoke it, hardening herself against me, and, with all a woman's keen devices, goading and taunting and tormenting me. I think she hated me beyond all power of language to express, and I loved her, even then, to madness and folly.

"That was a terrible honeymoon—such conflicts make deep marks upon the soul; we threw the whole strength of our youth into the battle, and that first year added ten to both our lives. I never saw beauty fade so rapidly as hers; and, for myself, people looked at me with wonder when I went into the world making a pretence of nonchalance and gaiety. I look back to this insane and sinful time with unspeakable remorse. There came a little truce to this at last; before I was twenty, one I was a father, and, in her danger and her suffering, Helena instinctively turned to my love for support. I fancied that I had won her back; the days were full of perfect bliss spent beside her and her baby in that quaint old town, where the bells rang softly day and night over the quiet houses.

"After that I cease to blame myself, for she knew I loved her, and was ready to give up everything for her and for the child. She could have done anything with me then; I had forgotten all, though she had not. With the return of health and strength, there came the old distrust and coldness—the first mixing with the world showed me my happiness had been nothing but a dream. But I had learned wisdom, and I determined to forbear. For my child's sake as well as for my own, I resolved to be gentle with her, and to win her affection by my constant care for her. But the love that we do not return has little value for us: she was too careless of my wishes, too anxious for admiration, not to outrage my feelings every moment. She loved her child with such a jealous fondness, that she resented every caress I gave him, and fancied that the change in me towards her resulted solely from my desire to keep him with me. It was impossible for her to forget; every

angry word I had ever spoken, I believe, lived in her mind distinctly to the moment of her death. It is useless to give you the details of that which followed; she had evil advisers; there was wrong on both sides; she had never understood me; she never could forgive; she left me. You may have heard some of the troubles that succeeded that. I was human; I had not yet learned self-control, and the child was mine as well as hers. I do not blame myself for the steps I took, though events have proved them to have been unwise. The law gave him to me, and then followed the years of banishment and concealment that cost her her health and comfort and respectability, killed the last throb of love I felt for her, and destroyed the last hope of rescuing the child from her influence.

"Many years before I found him here in —, I had given him up in intention to her. I doubt whether I could have had the heart to force him from her even if my search had been successful at the first; but I longed so to see him, to hold him in my arms once again, that for three years after I lost sight of them I gave myself up to the pursuit.

"A fortune came to me from Virginia, burdened with the condition of taking the testator's name. That aided me in destroying the traces of my former condition. How successful I was in the change is proved by the many quiet and unsuspected years I have spent in —.

"The excitement of travel and constant change of scene had deadened somewhat the sharpness of my regrets and longings, and the philosophy of the Divine Benefactor had emptied my heart of the last taint of bitterness, when I so strangely found myself with my boy in my arms beside his mother's grave. It was long before I could determine how to meet this strange emergency—whether to claim the boy and take him from you, as I had every right to do, or leaving him with you, to declare myself, which I knew was tantamount to another separation from him, for a few days had served to show me the light in which

the boy's father was regarded, and the bitter rejection that his claims would have received. Gentle as you are, Christine, I had a feeling that you would have had no mercy for your sister's execrated husband, and the result has shown me that I was not wrong.

"I hated this hypocrisy. I began it with a regard only for your happiness and the peace of your father's old years. I doubted, from month to month, whether I was equal to the sacrifice. Finally it came to be no sacrifice, and the greatest dread of my life became that I must some time let you know to whom you had given your confidence and kindness. It became a tangled web—it had better never have been begun.

"You know the rest. You can judge whether in any other position I could have done my duty more fully to the boy; whether by outraging his dead mother's wishes, taking him from the home where there seemed the most promise of benefiting him, tearing him from the love of one better and tenderer to him than his mother, I could have done a juster and wiser thing. It would have been easier to myself, happier for me in a thousand ways; what it would have been for him, I have not sight clear enough to determine.

"So let me leave this painful subject, never, probably, to be revived again in words, for I owe no explanation to any other human being. I leave it in your hands to say what may seem wise to you to Dr. Upham. If you think best not to disturb his few remaining moments of life by a shock so great as this would be, you may present my departure to him as the result of complications occasioned by my son's death; and you may say to him that nothing save the necessity of instant departure from these scenes would have made it possible for me to leave thus abruptly a friend so valued.

"I have longed to see his face once more, but I have judged it best (as you will not find it difficult to understand) to end my connexion with your house at once. In saying such a

farewell as this is, I cannot feel that it is ended without reverting a moment to our past relations—a thing which under other circumstances would, I know, have seemed unwarrantable; but you will understand this to be said without presumption, and with the calmness of a man who feels his part in life is ended, and who judges dispassionately of what has gone before, and knows that there is nothing to come after.

“I have no doubt you have long seen reason to feel thankful that you kept faith with Julian’s mother. Your ardent and childlike affection for me deceived you; I have not been blind to the change that has come, nor could I have wished it otherwise. I have not one reproach to make, I have no feeling of bitterness. You were a child, and you did not understand yourself; I should have been wiser, and estimated more truly the emotion you evinced. To have hoped that that young feeling would have outlived years of silence and the shock of such a discovery as this, would have been folly. I have not been disappointed, for my judgment warned me that it would be so, with only one exception: I was not prepared for what your face told me when you left me. I had fancied there would be a struggle, that past feelings of kindness would have revived their force for the moment. But—and it is the only wrong in my whole life of which I feel any sting—if I had any claim to talk of forgiveness towards *you*, I would say, I forgave your unspoken resentment, as I know you have, ere this, forgiven me all the unintentional evil which I have brought into your life.

“I thank Heaven that with me disappears the last link that connected your life with the sins and misfortunes of those who have gone. I feel a satisfaction in remembering your youth, and your still fresh capacities for happiness. You are free now; you have borne the yoke of duty with a most perfect heroism. God bless you, and all who may make you happy.

“EDWARD CATHERWOOD.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

A JUNE TWILIGHT.

"Was never payne but it had joye at last
In the fayre morrowe."

It was a soft June evening, almost twilight; but the fading of June days is so gradual, it is difficult to say where day ends and night begins. Christine had been leaning long over the rough bridge under which the mill-stream rushed, listening to the monotonous melody, and watching the darkening of the water as the sunset died away. But she thought little of the water and of the sunset; she was struggling with herself—pride and reason against the yearning of her heart and the clamor of an hourly growing misery.

Her father was dead; home was now lonely, lonely beyond expression; and the silent months had gone on without bringing her any news of Dr. Catherwood. She had written to him when her father died, and had sent for Rebecca and committed the letter to her care. The woman did not know his address, might not know it for months to come, but if she found it out she would forward it to him. She was grim and silent, and intercourse with her was always personally painful to Christine. The poor girl asked her faintly to let her know if she should hear from him, and the woman went away saying something below her breath, that might or might not be a promise.

Christine hoped it was, and for months lived upon the hope. She often passed the cottage and looked wistfully in at its closed windows, hoping to catch sight of Rebecca somewhere about

the house or garden ; but Rebecca was never to be seen, and from no one else was there any hope of hearing anything. Dr. Catherwood was not forgotten in —, but no one was in correspondence with him ; no one knew anything more than that he was travelling in Europe, and seldom if ever wrote to —.

Anxiety often reaches its climax without any perceptible acceleration from circumstances. That day Christine found herself more heavy-hearted than ever, and that evening she felt ready to endure any mortification and humiliation rather than not hear from Rebecca what she knew of Dr. Catherwood. Her resolution taken, she hurried across the dam, and did not stop till she reached the gate that led to the cottage. If she paused before opening it, it was only because her hand trembled so she could not lift the latch. The twilight had grown pretty thick, and she could only see, as she went down the path, that the windows were dark as ever, and the porch overgrown with untended vines. Her black dress brushed against the shrubs and weeds that had crept into the path, and the long grass hid the flower-beds that used to make the little garden bright.

She hurried round the corner of the house ; there were a good many trees standing close to it, and it seemed very dark. A side entrance stood open : she knocked faintly ; no one answered ; again, and after a moment of silence, she went in. Half way through the passage, a door opened opposite her, and she paused. It was Rebecca, who had heard her and was coming from the sitting-room which she occupied now altogether, a small nondescript apartment opening out of the dining-room.

“ Who is it ? ” she said, in a voice that made Christine want to be nobody. But she made an effort and said who she was, and then added, after a silence :

“ I came to know—to ask—that is—did you ever send my letter to Dr. Catherwood ? ”

The woman said she had, and was horribly silent again. By this time Christine was a little more under the influence of her anxiety, and a little less under the influence of her shyness.

"I want to know if you have heard from him?" she said.

Rebecca probably looked at her, but it was so dark she could not see her; her tone was very disagreeable as she said:

"Heard from him? About what?"

"About himself," said Christine, a little impatiently. "I asked you to let me know if you heard from him, and you knew I was anxious."

"That's your mistake; I didn't know anything of the kind," she returned, tartly.

"Was he well—where was he—and had he received my letter?" questioned Christine.

"He hasn't written," returned the woman, coldly; "so I can't say whether he's got your letter or no."

"Then you haven't heard?" she said, ready to cry.

"Well, one can hear without getting letters sometimes, can't one?" she retorted, with a sort of viciousness.

"From whom have you heard from him—he is not ill?" faltered Christine, in a voice that told even the spinster Rebecca the story of her heart.

Rebecca made a motion, a gesture of pointing to the door, to which Christine had her back.

She started and turned round quickly; some one stood in the doorway; in her agitation she could not distinguish who, but a sudden frightened, smothered feeling made her hurry to reach the door and to get out into the air. That some one on the threshold took her hand and held her fast.

"I came back last night," he said. "Don't go away from me, Christine."

There was something in his tender, protecting, familiar voice that rang through Christine's lonely heart; she had no answer but tears, and he would have liked none so well. He drew her

to him, and laid her head upon his shoulder, holding her hand against his lips and whispering his tender love.

Poor Christine! The fight was all over, and the day of peace begun.

* * * * *

"Christine," said Dr. Catherwood, coming one day into the room where his wife sat sewing alone in a sunny, white-curtained window, with a face as bright and soft in her solitude as if she were hearing beautiful music or reading lovely verses "Christine, I have good news to tell you of Madeline, your friend."

"Good news!" cried Christine, starting up. "Oh, I know! she is going to be married!"

"For shame, Christine," he said, with grave reproach in his voice, though with something not quite accordant in his eyes. "For shame—as if there were no other good news could be told about a woman. I expected something stronger-minded of you. I shall punish you by not telling you a word more of your friend to-day."

"Ah," pleaded Christine, "tell me. How can I wait? I take it all back. She has turned composer—author; she has studied medicine—is going to found a hospital. Only tell me."

"No, not a word to-day. There is no use in questioning me, remember."

THE END.

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